

Africans rally behind Ghali

21-22, 1996
HARARE (AFP) — African states on Friday rallied in support of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in his bid to win a second term, with the United States resolutely opposed to his candidacy. Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe said here that his country would continue to support the embattled 74-year-old Egyptian, adding that Washington's opposition to the African candidate was undemocratic. "We are very critical of the Americans. It is something we cannot accept... the practice is not democratic," Mr. Mugabe told a press conference. Mr. Mugabe's backing from Harare came as the woman touted as a possible compromise candidate, Mozambique's Graca Machel (see related story on page 4).



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordanian Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

Beirut marks Independence Day

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon celebrated its 53rd anniversary of independence on Friday six years after the end of its bloody civil war but is continuing to live with foreign troops on its soil. The day, which marks the end of French rule in 1943, was commemorated with a military parade, but met criticism from government opponents protesting at a lack of civil liberty in Lebanon. "Independence loses all its significance if freedom to demonstrate and freedom of expression are not respected," said Elias Abou Rizk, the leader of the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers, which has about 150,000 members. The confederation on Tuesday launched an order for a general strike throughout the country and called for a peaceful demonstration in Beirut on Nov. 28 to protest against government policy which, it claims, "deprives the country of bread and freedom."

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King and Queen on visit to Britain

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor have left for the United Kingdom on a several-day visit. They were seen off at the airport on Thursday by their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, Royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Upper House Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour, King's advisers, Cabinet ministers and other senior officials. Prince Hassan was sworn in as Regent before the King. Accompanying King Hussein were several Royal family members and Royal Court Chief Awa Khasawneh.

Jordan 'committed to preserving rights of refugees'

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan told the United Nations on Friday it was fully committed to seeking a solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees in the framework of a just and comprehensive Middle East peace settlement that ensures their political and legal rights. Addressing the General Assembly in a session dedicated to "colonisation," the Kingdom's permanent delegate, Hassan Abu Neme, said Jordan was hosting a large number of refugees and shouldering the responsibility of caring for them. The Kingdom is the most affected country by the refugee problem, he said, noting that Jordan is spending more than \$300 million for the refugees.

Israel plans to build three new settlements on Golan

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel has taken the first step towards building 900 new housing units for Jews on the occupied Golan Heights in a move sure to anger Syria, Israeli officials said on Friday. The units are part of a Golan Jewish settler plan to add a total of 2,500 homes for Israelis on the heights by the year 2000. Israel lands authority adviser Shai Segal told Reuters planning work is underway on the project. "They are working on locating the land and planning. First you have to have the land exact... Six hundred will be on the slopes of the Golan. The other (300 units) are being planned in different settlements on the Golan," Mr. Segal said. Tensions between Syria and the Jewish state have been on the rise since a right-wing government took office in June. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has recently sent messages to Damascus aimed at calming the situation. Israel's army radio quoted opposition member of parliament Uzi Baram as saying in reaction to the move: "If Netanyahu continues to 'calm' Arab countries at this rate, Israel will find itself on the brink of total confrontation in the region." Israel's Yediot Ahronoth daily said the lands authority work, ordered by Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, was undertaken with Mr. Netanyahu's knowledge. The prime minister's spokesman denied to report. Golan regional council head Yehuda Vollman said the 900 units are part of a project by Golan settlers to build 2,500 more houses for Jews on the Golan by 2000. Yediot said the units would comprise three new settlements. Vollman said all were expansions of existing communities. Some 15,000 Jews and 18,000 Druze currently live on the Golan. "I am investing a lot in this. I think if we want to create a different situation on the Golan and bring more people we have to think of what they would look for, therefore we've identified the slopes as attractive," Mr. Vollman said. He said the council had chosen plots for the units and the lands authority was checking the sites. Mr. Netanyahu shortly after taking office lifted a settlement building freeze the previous government had imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Golan, to which Israel extended its law in 1981 thus virtually annexing the plateau, did not fall under the building freeze. Syria and Israel have held sporadic peace talks for the last five years. Israel's previous government, publicly ready to make a partial pull-back, was wary of committing to a full withdrawal before knowing exactly what sort of peace Syria

Iraq lodges anti-Turkey complaint at U.N.

BAGHDAD (R) — Baghdad has called on the United Nations to investigate alleged Turkish bombings and incursions into northern Iraq, official newspapers reported on Friday. They quoted a letter sent by Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali and head of the Security Council as saying: "Iraq urges the U.N. to conduct immediate and comprehensive investigation of the continuous Turkish bombing of Iraqi towns and villages and entering illegally to its territory." "The Turkish ground troops supported by jet fighters and helicopter gunship penetrated on Nov. 3, 1996 two kilometres deep inside Iraqi territory... and a team of six Turks entered Dohuk's villages and towns and distributed questionnaires among people in order to collect personal information." Turkey often strikes across the border at separatist rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) who uses bases in northern Iraq in their fight for self-rule in southern Turkey. In Ankara, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Turkey would reply to the Iraqi protest.



Palestinian boys shout anti-Israel slogans as they march on Friday ahead of the coffins of two 13-year-old village boys who were killed by a landmine explosion on Thursday afternoon. The Israeli military said the mine, brought to the cemetery where the boys were playing, was of the type used by the Jordanian army and suggested it may have been part of a Palestinian guerrilla stockpile. During the funeral Palestinian villagers accused Israel of being behind the explosion (Reuters photo)

Real security in Middle East needs multi-dimensional approach — Regent

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Real security in the Middle East cannot be guaranteed unless it is achieved through a multi-dimensional approach that takes note of human, economic and development components along with the military considerations, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has said. In an interview with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz over the weekend, Prince Hassan urged concerted efforts to tackle challenges which pose serious threat to the future of the whole region. Enemies of peace are not interested in addressing the stressing challenges of water, environment and development, among others, said the Crown Prince.

Arabs and Jews, he said, must "step out of (acting in terms of) who did what to whom" and start redressing common problems. Warning against getting immersed in clichés that should be means to achieve the goal of comprehensive peace and not an end in themselves, Prince Hassan said "enough posturing and let us get down to work" on building the future of the region. Prince Hassan also warned against succumbing to extremist elements on both sides of the Arab-Israeli divide whose limited interests preclude the recognition of the rights of reach other. If the Israeli government is only interested in what its extremist supporters say, "there will be no step forward" said Prince Hassan, saying that the same scenario applies to the Arab side.

The Crown Prince also stressed the importance of keeping the refugees issue alive, rejecting recent trends towards considering the term refugees politically incorrect and emphasising the damaging consequences of the demographic upheavals that resulted from the building of Israel in Palestine. Responding to a question, Prince Hassan said that while there are Israelis who feel part of the region, some of them come to the area feeling they are part of the West and adopt "superior" attitudes that do not help in achieving interaction and coexistence. But Prince Hassan stressed the need to work together to build a future of peace in which there will be no need for international forces to guarantee the stability of parts of the region.

Prince Hassan said that Jordan can act as a pivot between Israel and a highly sophisticated network of Jewish associations in the Western hemisphere and Arab oil but should not be seen and will not accept to be a walkover for the exclusive benefit of others. Noting that Jordan had worked on liberalising its laws to allow for economic growth and interaction, he said the full economic fruits of the peace era cannot be achieved unless there is a corresponding measures to review protectionist policies in Israel. Prince Hassan said despite the setback to the peace process, peace is the only alternative from which there can be no going back.

Arab Israelis protest discrimination, scuffle with police as cabinet meets

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Several hundred municipal employees from Arab Israeli areas, complaining they had not been paid in months, protested Friday in West Jerusalem over government discrimination against non-Jewish towns.



An Israeli soldier tries to cover a camera during scuffles with protesting Arab Israelis outside the prime minister's office on Friday (Reuters photo)

The demonstrators gathered outside the offices of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his weekly cabinet meeting, shouting "yes to equality, no to discrimination and racism." Several scuffles broke out between protesters and police and one demonstrator was taken to hospital with minor injuries, police said. One teen-age demonstrator was hurt in the stomach, taken to a hospital and later released, said police spokesman Shmuel Ben Ruby.

The confrontation began when police pushed back the protesters, Mr. Ben Ruby said. Protesters were making noise outside Mr. Netanyahu's office as the cabinet convened for its weekly meeting, Mr. Ben Ruby said. The demonstrators, including Arab mayors, demanded the same state funding as Israel's Jewish communities. Israel's Channel 2 TV said 40 of the 53 Arab towns and villages are

on the verge of bankruptcy and have not paid their employees for months. Earlier this week, Arab mayors threatened to take their case to foreign ambassadors to draw attention to their problems. Successive Israeli governments have promised to give Israel's Arab citizens a fairer share of state funds, but the spending gap has remained. Israeli Arabs lived under military rule until 1966. A spokesman for the Arab municipal governments, Hussein Suleiman,

accused the right-wing Netanyahu government of refusing to transfer funds to the towns promised by the previous Labour administration of Shimon Peres. The funds were destined to help pay some \$130 million in debt accumulated by the local governments and which have forced some Arab towns to stop paying their employees. "Forty-eight years after the creation of the state of Israel, it's time the Arabs were no longer considered enemies, foreigners, but were treated as full-fledged citizens with the same rights as Jews," said Taleb Sanaa, a member of parliament from the United Arab List Party. Mr. Netanyahu met with a delegation of Arab mayors to discuss their grievances. During his election campaign early this year, Mr. Netanyahu pledged to give Arab children "the same opportunities as my own son Yair." Israel has some 850,000 Arab citizens. State was created in 1948, out of a total population of 5.5 million.

General Assembly adopts resolution to step up cooperation with Arab League

NEW YORK (UNIS) — The General Assembly has adopted without a vote a resolution on intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League.

Introducing the draft, the representative of Syria expressed the league's desire for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. For this to work, however, there had to be a balanced peace formula. The observer for Arab League paid tribute to the continuing consultations and contacts between the United Nations and Arab League at all levels. Efforts to resolve the question of Palestine were at the head of the concerns of the league.

The representative of Israel said he joined the consensus in favour of the resolution because of his country's desire to make peace with its neighbours, all of whom were members of the Arab League. Just as Israel was committed to peace, it was equally committed to regional economic cooperation.

For its consideration of cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League, the assembly has before it a report of the secretary-general and a 19-power draft resolution.

Under the provisions of the draft resolution, the assembly would request the Secretariat of the United Nations and the General Secretariat of the Arab League to intensify their cooperation. It would also decide that a general meeting between the United Nations system and the league take place once every two years and that inter-agency sectoral meetings be organised regularly. It would also recommend that the next general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the Arab League and its specialised agencies be held during 1997.

The resolution is sponsored by Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The report of the secretary-general reviews meetings and other cooperative activities undertaken by the United Nations and its agencies, and the Arab League. An addendum to the report reviews activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI) taken to promoting independent and pluralistic Arab media.

Farouk Al Attar (Syria), introducing the draft resolution, said the Arab League had often expressed its concern for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. For this to work, however, there had to be a balanced peace formula. The cooperation between the United Nations and the league must continue to be promoted, in order to achieve a peace that would endure, according to the principles of the charter and in their spirit. He added that support for the Arab states in this trying period was a noble objective which ought to attract the support of all members of the international community. He called for the resolution to be adopted by consensus as a demonstration of this support.

Mahmoud Abul Nasr, observer for the Arab League, paid tribute to the continuing consultations and contacts between the United Nations and the Arab League at all levels. Such meetings and visits reaffirmed the provisions of Chapter 8 of the charter and allowed cooperation, on a wide range of international issues. The world today was delicate and sensitive, he said, and required the strengthening of the charter of the United Nations and the promotion of its effective-

ness. The league was ready to contribute in translating into action the declaration made by the heads of state and government at the United Nations 50th anniversary last year.

He said the Arab League was following the efforts of the United Nations and the secretary-general to resolve many issues around the world. The question of Palestine was at the head of the league's concerns. Unfortunately, the current environment did not call for optimism, given Israel's refusal to honour previously-reached agreements, and its plans to build new settlements, among other issues. The league hoped the opportunity would not be lost to build a just and durable peace. It was desirous of continuing cooperation with the United Nations in all fields. The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League was adopted without a vote.

Explanation of vote

Yael Rubinstein (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote following the vote, said Israel's decision to join the consensus on the resolution had been guided by its desire to make peace with its neighbours, all of whom were members of the Arab League. Israel had also taken steps to implement the interim agreement signed with the Palestinians. Israeli defence forces had redeployed from six of the large Arab cities on the West Bank. Palestinians throughout the territories had assumed responsibility for their own affairs, including internal security, public order and all aspects of their daily lives.

She said that just as Israel was committed to peace, it was equally committed to strengthening regional economic ties. Israel was encouraged by steps taken to lift economic boycotts, such as last year's decision

of the Gulf Cooperation Council to lift the secondary and tertiary boycott against Israel. It was hoped that those positive developments would find expression within the framework of the Arab League. The time had come for the members of the league to take further measures so as to eliminate their boycott against Israel altogether. As a first step, the league could adopt a decision similar to that taken by the Gulf council.

She noted that the third Middle East/North African economic conference had been held in Cairo last month. Business leaders from Israel, the Arab states and Muslim states from beyond the region had met and concluded arrangements which would help augment the productive capacity of the region and contribute to its broad-based economic development.

Israel supported the cooperation between the United Nations and various regional organisations, including the Arab League. However, it still did not belong to a regional group at the United Nations, due to the political objections of some member states. Israel called upon the members of the league to lift their objections to the admission of Israel to the Asian Group. She said Israel urged the establishment of joint projects with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), within the framework of regional agricultural development in areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian council. Israel felt the Arab World must devote a greater share of aid to the Palestinian council, to match the aid given by such donors as the European Union. Israel welcomed efforts to advance the socio-economic, educational, health and cultural standing of the Palestinian residents of the territories.



FLIGHT FOR SAFETY: An Afghan refugee family makes its way on foot towards Kabul on Friday. Thousands of refugees have fled their villages north of the capital to escape the fierce fighting between the radical Taleban and ousted government forces led by Ahmad Shah Masood (Reuters photo)

Family to visit Israeli accused of spying

CAIRO (AP) — The state security prosecutor will allow family members to visit an Arab Israeli accused of spying on Egypt, a police official said Friday.

Prosecutor Hisham Seraya said that in a humanitarian gesture, the wife and two brothers of Azam Azam, 35, would be permitted to visit him now that police have finished interrogations, according to the official, who refused to be named.

An exception is being made for the high-profile case, which has been taken up by ranking Israeli politicians who say Azam is innocent. Generally, Egyptian law bars suspected spies from meeting with anyone but their lawyers until their indictment has been announced.

The indictment of Azam and that of an Egyptian arrested shortly after him on the same charges are expected in the next few days.

Azam, a native of Israel's Galilee who worked as a mechanic at the Egyptian-Israeli Tefron textile factory in Cairo, was arrested Nov. 6 by Egyptian security agents in front of his hotel here. He was accused of recruiting Egyptians to gather information on the country's military.

Mideast conflict has turned into fight between extremists, U.S. official says

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The century-long conflict between the Arabs and Israelis is no longer a struggle between mainstream Israelis and Palestinians, but confined to those on the extremes, the State Department's Aaron Miller, deputy to special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross, said at a conference hosted by the Middle East Policy Council Thursday.

Although setbacks are inevitable in any conflict of such duration and complexity, "profound changes" have taken place in the people of the region over the past few years, Mr. Miller noted. With the exception of Libya and Iraq, every Arab nation is now, to one degree or another, participating in the peace process. It is "the beginning of the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict," he suggested.

Despite the problems which remain, the nations involved are "past the point of no return on this process."

Yet, to keep the peace process moving forward, four key goals must be achieved, Mr. Miller said. They are implementing the accords the Israelis and Palestinians have already agreed upon; establishing the "free movement of people and goods" in the areas under Palestinian control, so that the Palestinian economy can grow; ensuring Israeli security through "enhanced and increased" security cooperation between the two parties; and developing a "sense of partnership" between the Palestinians and Israelis.

These goals can be achieved, Mr. Miller said. In addition, a way will have to be found to reestablish negotiations between Israel and Syria and reach an agreement on Lebanon, Mr. Miller noted.

As for the United States, it must continually seek to "find a balance" between doing too much and too little for the parties, Mr. Miller said. Ultimately, it is up to the parties themselves to decide on the future. In the meantime, the United States is the only country which has managed to earn the trust of both sides.

This "carries and enormous responsibility," Mr. Miller commented. But the United States will continue to make the peace process a top priority, he vowed. "There's no alternative."

As is typical in any discussion of the Middle East and the U.S. role in it, there were differing opinions expressed at the conference.

David Mack, a former State Department official and ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, stressed the importance the Gulf states attach to progress in the peace process. Any protracted stalemate in the process risks catalysing anti-American sentiment and exacerbating the alienation many Arabs feel from the West, Mr. Mack argued.

There is a wide-held perception among the Gulf states that the United States is more concerned with Israel and its security than the Gulf, Mr. Mack said. "We must be aware of this perception."

James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, took a decidedly negative view of the peace process at present, saying: "The simple reality is the process is not working" and the process must be strengthened if a general radicalisation of the region is to be prevented. In his view, the United States has put too much pressure on the Palestinians and not enough on the Israelis. In addition, the Palestinian economy has grown "dramatically worse" since the peace process began. Without the free movement of goods and people, he said, there can be no economic development in either the West Bank or Gaza.

Palestinian police free Hamas-linked PNC members

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian police released two officials from the political party linked to the fundamentalist group Hamas, who had been detained for over a week, party sources said on Friday.

Mohammed Shehab and Bizar Rayan, both members of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO's) parliament, were

arrested in the Gaza Strip 10 days ago for "Hamas activities," a party official told AFP.

They were released Thursday night, the official said.

Mr. Rayan sat next to Yasser Arafat on Friday during weekly prayers in Abbas Mosque in Gaza City, alongside Sheikh Ahmed Bahar, a high official in the Khalas party and former Hamas

leader, an AFP correspondent said.

Mr. Shehab and Mr. Rayan represented the National Islamic Salvation (Khalas) party, which includes many former members of Hamas, at the PNC's first session on Palestinian soil, held in Gaza City last March and attended by Mr. Arafat.

Israel has accused the Palestinian National Authority of easing off a

crackdown on the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, which led a series of anti-Jewish suicide bombings in February and March.

Palestinian police arrested dozens of Hamas members in the months following the bombings, but many of them have since been released.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
14:05 The Adventures of Mickey and Donald
14:30 Cinque
15:00 Doc — La France Aux Mille Villages
15:30 Fete des Bebes
16:00 Sports — Gillette
16:30 Chris Cross
17:00 News Flash
17:01 Futures
17:15 Drama — Blue Heelers
18:00 Serie — Jack
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Ziva
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Something Wilder
20:00 Doc — Gardens of the World
20:30 Prism
21:10 Lois and Clarke
22:00 News in English
22:25 Best Seller — Zoya
23:15 Classical Movie — Casanova Brown

PRAYER TIMES

04:45 Fajr
06:06 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:22 Dhuhur
14:13 Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De La Salle Church Tel. 661656
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622866
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 834328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Sunny and moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising slightly and winds northeasterly to easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Amman 10/20
Aqaba 16/18
Deserts 08/22
Jordan Valley 16/18
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 66 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
ANMAN:
Dr. Arafat Ashbah 602507
Dr. Abbas Al Haldim 85446
Dr. Jamal Jharah 847351
Dr. Ayman Al Muntaseb 875748
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 657055
Nairoudh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy 636381
ZARQA:
Dr. Hial Al Sayyid 986702
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue

630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseln Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn

644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)90560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 08153200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:55 Damascus (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:40 London, Berlin (RJ)
18:30 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
19:35 Vienna (RJ)
01:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:35 Bangkok (RJ)

23:40 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
23:50 London (KL)
01:00 London, Damascus (BA)
03:45 Rome (AZ)
06:29 Tel Aviv (LY)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:20 Aqaba (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
11:05 Vienna (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30 Brussels, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
12:15 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:15 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Bombay (RJ)
20:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (LY)
20:20 Lamaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights

00:15 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Beirut, Athens (QA)
07:00 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
23:10 Lamaca (CY)
23:30 Can (MS)
23:55 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (AF)
00:40 Amsterdam (KL)
04:35 Rome (AZ)
06:30 London (KL)

ROYAL WINGS (RW) FLIGHTS

20:50 Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 550/550
Banana (imported) 800/650
Cabbage 100/40
Carrot 290/200
Cauliflower 230/180
Cucumber (large) 140/80
Cucumber (small) 220/170
Eggplant 140/80
Garlic 700/500
Grapes 340/260
Lemon 370/180
Marrow (large) 140/100
Marrow (small) 250/200
Onion (green) 300/180
Onion (dry) 170/120
Olive (green) 450/400
Olive (black) 700/500
Orange 550/350
Pear 650/450
Pepper (hot) 260/200
Pepper (sweet) 200/120
Potato 340/180
Spinach 250/100
String Bean 550/350
Tomato 280/200

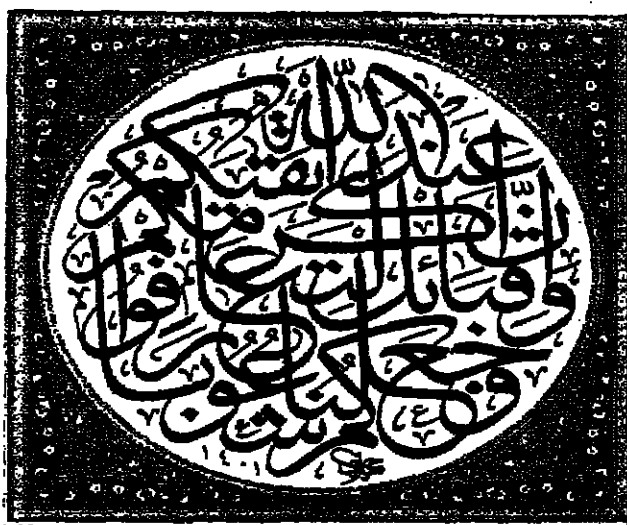
Regent to open Islamic culture, art meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, will today open the biennial meeting for the Centre of Research in Islamic Culture and Arts in Amman and will inaugurate an art exhibition of Arab and Islamic calligraphy.

Along with the Regent, HRH Princess Wijdan Ali and other leading figures from Jordan and the Islamic World will deliver addresses at the two-day meeting to be held at the Prince Grand Hotel.

Organised by the Institute of Diplomacy, the meeting is expected to focus on a review of research work on Islamic art and culture, board reports and a lecture by a Turkish participant on present and future Arab-Turkish relations.

The one-week exhibition



Example of displayed Islamic art design

will display 56 award-winning works of Arab and Islamic calligraphers from 18 countries including eight works from Jordan.

The exhibition will later be displayed elsewhere in Jordan to allow more time for the public to view the works.

Electricity workers, minister to negotiate end to strike

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Representatives of the Union of Electricity Workers and the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) management have been requested to attend a meeting today with Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh in what seems to be a last ditch attempt to end a current strike involving 3,000 JEPCO workers.

Dr. Shakhaneh Friday told the Jordan Times that the Ministry of Labour considers the two-day strike illegal and that it must end so that the two sides can work out a per-

manent solution to their dispute.

"We have been patient and we are ready to contribute towards a fair solution, but the government cannot tolerate an indefinite strike," the minister said, adding that the conclusion of the work stoppage was imperative to safeguard the public interest.

"The workers have been demanding a personal meeting with the management to air their views and, thus, such a meeting was held at my office on Thursday," Dr. Shakhaneh said. He further remarked that the JEPCO management displayed a "positive atti-

tude" at the meeting and requested that employees return to work so that an opportune negotiating climate might be created.

He said that union representatives promised to convey details of the six-hour Thursday meeting to their colleagues and subsequently state any concerns to the minister before the Saturday meeting.

"The meeting can be convened only on condition that the strike be suspended in order to create an appropriate climate for negotiations," he added.

The workers' demands are comprised of a 15th annual salary, a 10 per cent hardship allowance and

amendments to regulations concerning the termination of employment compensation," Dr. Shakhaneh said.

The strikers declined to work for six hours on Wednesday and reduced the duration of the strike to three hours the following day during which time several Parliament deputies and political party members tried vainly to mediate between management and union.

Union President Khalifa Ma'aita Thursday reiterated that the workers are fully within their rights to strike in order to secure their demands and he again threatened to disrupt electric supplies if these

demands are not met.

The union's strike has been opposed by the Federation of Labour Unions in Jordan which decried it as illegal and one which should be terminated to allow the government-appointed arbiter to resolve the dispute.

The workers union was reported to have sent an appeal to His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti seeking support for their demands and Friday convened a meeting with other union representatives to seek their views on the situation as well as backing for their demands.

Arab industrialists demand end to Israeli blockade of territories

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Egyptian industrialists have concluded meetings in Cairo by calling on Israeli authorities to end restrictive measures imposed on the Palestinians and to lift the blockade on the occupied territories.

This was deemed necessary so as to secure the free flow of goods and services for those living therein.

In a joint statement released Friday following the Cairo meetings, the two sides stated they will refrain from participating in the projected "regional business council" slated to group Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Israel until a just and durable peace, guaranteeing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to an independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital, has been realised.

The Amman Chamber of Industry and the Egyptian Industries Federation called for the creation of a pan-Arab Industrial Federation, grouping Egyptian, Jordanian and any other member of the various industrial unions in the Arab world.

Such a federation, the statement maintained, would intend to promote Arab industries, market their products and help the Arab World face challenges posed by global economic blocs.

The statement also said that the two sides will extend an invitation to different Arab industrial groups to convene a meeting in Amman, in the first quarter of 1997, and inaugurate the proposed pan-Arab industrial federation.

The two sides have also resolved to form a joint committee to tackle problems pertaining to Jordanian and Egyptian industries.

The statement called on both countries' private sectors to embark on joint projects employing raw materials and primary components and also called for an expansion of industrial cities to employ greater numbers of Arab workers and, therefore, contribute towards resolving unemployment.

The participating industrialists said they would recommend their respective governments to establish a free-trade zone to facilitate the flow of goods and pave the ground for the creation of an Arab common market

Meeting to discuss water legislation

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-day meeting on water legislation, organised by the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), will commence Sunday at the Amra Hotel in Amman, according to a UN Information Service statement.

Participants in the meeting, which will be chaired by Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kavar, include experts involved in water issues, regional and international organisations dealing with water legislation and representatives from the United Nations.

The experts will review existing and projected efforts to formulate water-based legislation, regulations and ordinances for Jordan and will equally discuss their implementation in relation to the development, utilisation, protection and management of water resources in the ESCWA region.

According to the statement, participants will exchange views on the establishment of effective mechanisms for the rational utilisation of water and integrated management of regional water resources.

Ministry uncovers three embezzlement cases

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has stated the divulgence of three cases of embezzlement over the years 1994 and 1995 and that these involved ministry officials, according to a report Friday in the Arabic daily Al Ra'i.

Responding to a newspaper article covering audit bureau reports and civil service embezzlement in 1995, published on Nov. 19, the ministry said that one official was, indeed, involved in an embezzlement case, without specifying the amount involved.

The message said that he was collecting contributions for a Koranic society without giving contributors legal receipts.

The ministry stated that its departments uncovered

the case in 1994 when it initiated a plan to tighten financial control on committees collecting zakat (alms) and contributions for mosques.

It added that the named official was referred to the prosecutor general for trial in 1995 following thorough investigations.

Citing another embezzlement case, the ministry said that in 1995 the then-Amman Awqaf department accountant embezzled an unspecified amount of money.

In an explanatory note, also published in Al Ra'i, the ministry said that it had referred the accountant to the prosecutor general for trial, subsequent to joint investigations by the ministry and audit bureau.

The ministry said that an audit bureau study of the

department's accounts did not reveal any irregularities at the time.

In the third embezzlement case, the ministry said that the accountant of Al-Dawa' and Islamic Law College, an institution working under the auspices of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, had embezzled JD 14,896 which he collected from students as school fees and then absconded from the country.

The ministry maintained that the accountant left the country after forging a travel permit.

Jordanian regulations do not allow government officials to leave the country without obtaining an official permit.

The ministry blames the embezzlement on the fees collection system currently enforced at the college;

pursuing to the system students asked to pay fees directly to the college accountant, rather than to banks as in the case of other universities.

It also cited the lack of a quotidian monitoring of funds deposited in banks as one of the motives leading to this case in that the accountant reportedly used to leave the office on a daily basis under the pretext of depositing the funds without actually doing it.

The audit bureau Monday disclosed that government employees embezzled JD 718,920 from ministries and departments in 1995.

The report also stated that the greatest number of embezzlements occurred within the Ministry of Supply with 14 cases involving JD 218,874.

What's Going On

EXHIBITIONS

- Works by Arab artists residing in Spain, Zafer Adnan, Issam Ta'i, and Haken Sa'di at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Dec. 3.
- Works by Jalal Arikat and Larisa Najjar at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 6.
- Retrospective exhibition by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Kassab-Bachi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 10. Also displaying works of contemporary Arab artists.
- Works by Syrian artist Mustafa Ali at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. until Nov. 30.
- Aspects from the modern Jordanian plastic art by several Jordanian artists entitled "Message" at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 28.
- Photo panels and mosaics exhibition by German artist Yona Joest entitled "Petra — A Cosmological Dialogue" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 30.
- Works by twenty four artists (from Iraq, Holland, Lebanon, Vietnam, Spain, Greece, Curacao, Indonesia, Russia, and Chile) entitled Houd and Hamer "Art in Cultural Transmission" at the Royal Society of Fine Art, Jabal Weibdeh until Nov. 30.
- Photo exhibition by Basma Asfour entitled "Doubles Regards" at the French Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

Two students win Czech award for artwork

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two young Jordanian students, awarded honorary diplomas for their entrances in the 24th annual Lidice Exhibition of Children's Art, Thursday accepted their award at the Czech Embassy in a ceremony which opened discussion regarding future art scholarships for Jordanians.

The students, Rana Mohammad, 14, and Sana Alsasfen, 15, met with Czech Ambassador Tomas Smetanka and Director of the Cultural Relations Department to the Ministry of Education Badia Murad to discuss future ambitions and art inspirations.

Both students contributed oil paintings portraying village life, and their works were distinguished from over 7,200 entries worldwide,

of which only 100 were chosen.

The competition is held in memory of the young Czechs who died in the destruction of the village of Lidice during World War II.

The entrance of Jordanian students into the contest was organised through the Ministry of Education which gathered the artwork from schools throughout the Kingdom.

Ms. Murad speculated that approximately five Jordanian students have previously won this event.

Both Ms. Mohammad and Ms. Alsasfen expressed interest in continuing their art education, and the two were able to complete their contest entries using their respective school facilities in Karak and Zarqa.

Ms. Murad told the Jordan Times that the ministry is currently working towards improving art and

music curricula in schools.

"We have already increased the time span of art periods and music classes from the first grade to the secondary schools," she said.

"We have limited university level education for the arts which does not ensure that students might continue to follow their interests in art," she added during discussions aimed at offering increased art and music scholarships from the Czech Republic to Jordanian students.

According to the ambassador, such scholarships may develop between the countries at some future date.

Applications for the 25th annual Lidice Exhibition are currently being accepted, and those schools interested can call the Czech Embassy for details.

EUCO to feature Mozart, Haydn and Liszt

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The European Union Chamber Orchestra (EUCO) is to give a unique performance on Sunday Nov. 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the Prince Hassan Auditorium at the University of Jordan.

The event is being held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The concert will feature Symphony No. 1 in E flat major by W.A. Mozart, the piano concert in D major by Haydn, the Angelus by Liszt and the Sinfonia in D minor by Boccherini.

Mozart's symphony includes an original slow movement written in C minor, probably the composer's favoured key.

Haydn's concerto is a brilliant composition, sometimes unjustly forgotten, among those conducted by Ljov Skou Larsen, and the guest piano soloist will be renowned Jordanian pianist, Nabeel.

Miss Nabeel is now based in London but will accompany the EUCO in this event. The concert was made possible

through the efforts of the Delegation of the European Commission in Amman, who is presenting the EUCO in the Kingdom, with support from the Belgian Embassy, the Spanish Embassy, the French Cultural Centre, the Goethe Institute, the Philadelphia Hotel, Royal Jordanian and Freddy for Music.

The EUCO (formerly ECCO) already performed in Jordan last October. Its performance is still remembered as a highly successful event, characterised by dynamism, charisma and joy.

The orchestra consists of talented young European musicians. World famous artists have already played with the EUCO — Maurice André, James Galaway, Tamas Vasary, Marisa Robles, Julian Lloyd Weber, the great Igor Oistrach, and superstar Sir Yehudi Menuhin to name only a few. The first EUCO performance took place in 1981.

The ensemble now has an impressive number of concerts in its biography and an equally impressive discography of recordings.



European Union Chamber Orchestra

The EUCO is sponsored by Queen Sofia of Spain.

The EUCO concert this week is part of a tour that will also take the 15-member orchestra to Syria and Egypt. The musicians, however, return to Amman one week after the concert in order to

conduct a music workshop at the National Music Conservatory — Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

The ensemble's future plans include participation in the 1997 Jerash Festival. The European Union is also planning to constitute an

orchestra dedicated to baroque music and is actively and directly supporting the idea of a Middle East Chamber Orchestra (MECO) which will exclusively include performers from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq.

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African states keep Ghali's name in play for top U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, running for a second five-year term in office, said Thursday that he did not wish to see his name submitted to the Security Council for another vote.

But at the same time he said he was not withdrawing from the race, despite Tuesday's U.S. veto against his candidacy, and would wait for African countries or the Security Council to make their next move.

The seeming contradiction coincides with the strategy of leading African states, who at this point are driving the campaign for his re-election, diplomats said.

The aim, they said, was to keep Dr. Ghali's candidacy alive as long as possible and thereby not put forth any other names. Other candidates who may formally be placed in nomination at this point would probably be shot down immediately by African states, and possibly France.

The deadlock, some African envoys believe, might at minimum produce a compromise solution or drive

everyone back into Dr. Ghali's camp.

"I received a 14-1 vote so I don't want another vote. There is no reason for another vote," Dr. Ghali said during a casual corridor conversation with CNN and Reuters.

He answered "No" when asked if the U.S. veto meant he should withdraw his name. His term expires on Dec. 31.

On Tuesday, the United States cast the sole vote against Dr. Ghali in the first round of balloting. Another vote is not scheduled before next week, if then.

Washington unilaterally decided to veto Dr. Ghali because the Clinton administration has said the reforms he made at the world body have not been far-reaching enough. They contend his candidacy would further delay payment by the republican-dominated congress of the \$1.4 billion U.S. debt to the United Nations, which is bankrupting the world body.

The 15-seat Security Council has agreed to give priority to candidates from

Africa, on grounds that if Dr. Ghali is denied the second term given his predecessors, he should at least be followed by another African.

Like the United States, France, as a permanent member, has veto power on the Security Council along with Britain, Russia and China. Among the 10 non-permanent members, there are three African states — Egypt, Botswana and Guinea-Bissau.

Botswana's ambassador, Legwele Joseph Legwele, told reporters, "There is a candidate called Dr. Boutros Ghali and the Africans have said to the world that he is re-elected."

Asked if the secretary-general's name would be resubmitted again in a formal resolution, he said, "when you have submitted someone's name and he gets a landslide, why would you necessarily re-submit it?"

Egypt's Ambassador Nabil Elaraby said that 52 African countries meeting Tuesday night did not propose other candidates. "No

one raised his hand and said 'I or my neighbour has another candidate.'"

But Niger has said it intends to propose Hamid Algbid, head of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. And Ghana's Foreign Minister Obed Asamoah said Wednesday that his country was ready to propose Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping operations.

Some western diplomats, however, believe the African strategy may be self-defeating.

"The fallacy of this strategy is that it assumes the United States would change its mind," said one envoy. If Africans delayed in putting forth candidates, other countries outside of the continent might do so.

Even a compromise extending Dr. Ghali's term for one or two years — which so far Washington has rejected — would be difficult because the United States "has made it clear they are not prepared to work for him," he said.

Apartheid czar Botha rejects blame and refuses apology

CAPE TOWN (R) — Former South African President P.W. Botha has declared he would never apologise for apartheid and denounced what he called an unforgiving assault on the Afrikaner by the country's new black rulers.

"I am not guilty of any deed for which I should apologise or ask for amnesty. I therefore have no intention of doing this," the 80-year-old ex-president said.

Mr. Botha, one of the last two surviving white apartheid presidents, made his remarks in a written statement after a private meeting with Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a secret location. No media were allowed to witness the encounter.

Archbishop Tutu heads a truth and reconciliation commission, intended to heal the wounds of apartheid, which has heard from police officers that Mr. Botha almost certainly knew about the torture and murder of black activists.

"I am deeply concerned about the fierce and unforgiving assault which is being launched against the Afrikaner and his language at all levels of society," said Mr. Botha, who became prime minister in 1978.

The post was converted to a presidency in 1984. Five years later Mr. Botha was succeeded by F.W. de Klerk who was ousted by Nelson

Mandela's African National Congress in South Africa's first all-race election in April 1994.

Mr. Botha said he had never associated himself with "blatant murder," but he conceded, "...That there might have been instances during the conflict of the past where individuals have exceeded the limits of their authority."

"I cannot be expected to take responsibility for the actions of any such individuals," Mr. Botha said.

Mr. Botha, who has led a reclusive existence in his coastal retirement home since leaving office, said in the 10-page statement that reconciliation between former enemies could be achieved only by "closing the book on the past and focusing on the challenges of the future in unity."

"In many circles the Afrikaner is being isolated to be punished for all the unfavourable events in the history of South Africa... concern exists that your commission is being abused in this campaign of revenge against the Afrikaner," Mr. Botha said.

He said British colonialists and not Afrikaners had introduced race discrimination into South Africa.

"The Afrikaner was a victim of (British) colonial greed... The recent conflicts in which we were involved were primarily against So-

viet imperialism and colonialism," Mr. Botha said.

He asserted that it was he who had begun the process of reform which led to Mr. Mandela being released from a life prison sentence in February 1990 and also claimed responsibility for removing some racist legislation.

"As head of the government of the day — a legally effected government which was internationally recognised — I accept full political responsibility for the policies which were followed," Mr. Botha said.

But he added that he and his former cabinet could not be expected to react to every allegation that came up during truth commission hearings.

"Your commission should provide me and the ex-ministers with a document comprehensively detailing all those aspects on which it requires comment or clarification," he told Archbishop Tutu.

Mr. Botha said evidence from a former police general to the commission that he had ordered the bombing of an office block in Johannesburg housing anti-apartheid activists was wrong.

"These allegations are based on untested, unconfirmed and unsubstantiated hearsay," the former president said.

Yeltsin quits hospital for rest home

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, continuing his steady convalescence from open heart surgery, moved from hospital to a government rest home Friday.

NTV commercial television showed Mr. Yeltsin, wearing a fur hat and long dark coat, waving cheerfully as he stepped into the presidential Mercedes-Benz limousine for the short drive from the Central Clinical Hospital to Barvikha Sanatorium.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, is said to be making steady progress

after his Nov. 5 quintuple bypass operation but doctors have warned him against taking things too fast.

Interfax news agency quoted a doctor at the hospital, Alexander Nikolayev, as saying Friday Mr. Yeltsin's condition was "entirely satisfactory and in line with the gravity of the operation he has undergone."

His blood pressure was normal and his pulse was 80, said Dr. Nikolayev, who said he examined Mr. Yeltsin just before his departure from the Central Clinical

Hospital.

On Wednesday, in his first public appearance since before his operation, Mr. Yeltsin said that he was in fighting mood and would return to work after a spell in Barvikha. Chief Kremlin Dr. Sergei Mironov warned, however, against overdoing things.

Aides say Mr. Yeltsin will return by the end of the year to work in the Kremlin, where his prolonged absence has triggered jockeying for influence among members of his entourage and has put many of Russia's problems on hold.

1 killed, 5 hurt in Kashmir car bomb attack

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — At least one person was killed and five injured in a car bomb blast in the Kashmir summer capital of Srinagar Friday, police said. A civilian died in the midday explosion near the state police headquarters in Srinagar's Central Batmaloo district, a police spokesman said.

"We have cordoned off the area and are investigating the blast," he added.

Witnesses said the bomb was planted in an ambassador car, the Indian version of a British model from the

1950s, and popular with government officials.

"The impact of the blast blew up a portion of a victim's head and the whole area was splattered with blood," said Latief, a witness. "Window panes of a nearby petrol station were shattered due to the explosion."

There were no claims of responsibility for the attack in the high-security zone.

Police said the ambassador, which was stolen by suspected militants a few days ago, was packed with explosives and set off by a

remote device. "There were three policemen among the five injured in the blast," the spokesman said.

It was the second major attack in Srinagar, after Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah took charge as the state's first elected government after nine years.

A car bomb on Oct. 22 outside a Srinagar building housing senior state politicians killed two and injured four.

More than 15,000 people have died in Kashmir in separatist-linked violence since 1989.

Mother Teresa back in hospital after heart failure

CALCUTTA (R) — Mother Teresa, revered as the "saint of the gutters" for her work with India's destitute, was taken to hospital with heart trouble Friday, but her doctor said he was hopeful she would recover.

It was the third time since August that the 86-year-old Roman Catholic nun, who won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, had been admitted to hospital for emergency care.

Mother Teresa's latest heart trouble began at about 11:30 p.m. (1800 GMT) Thursday, said her cardiologist, Dr. Asim Kumar Bardhan. "Last night it was serious," he told reporters at Woodlands Nursing Home.

She was admitted to the hospital at 2:30 a.m. (2100 GMT Thursday) with acute left ventricular heart failure, the hospital said in a medical bulletin.

"Her irregular heart rate is persisting. At present she is fully conscious and comfortable," it said.

Dr. Bardhan said Mother Teresa was breathing on her own after initially relying on a respirator.

"She is getting treatment for heart failure and she is still under investigation. A team of doctors is looking after her," he said.

"It is very difficult to say what her chances of recovery are. She is a chronic patient of heart disease. But we are hopeful," he said.

Mother Teresa's health began to deteriorate in 1989, when she was fitted with a heart pacemaker.

Since then she has spent time in hospital for heart disease, bacterial pneumonia, broken ribs, malaria, and lung problems.

She spent nearly three weeks at Woodlands Nursing Home in late August and early September for heart trouble, malaria and pneumonia.

Two weeks after returning to her Calcutta-based order, she fell off a chair and hit her head. A brain scan revealed a blood clot in her brain but it disappeared and she was later released.

Last Saturday, Mother Teresa received honorary American citizenship in a ceremony led by U.S. Ambassador to India Frank Wisner.

She is one of only five people in U.S. history to have received the accolade.

Others include former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg.



President Bill Clinton cradles a tiny Koala bear in his arms as he and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton tour The Rainforest habitat in Port Douglas Friday. The president held the Koala named Chelsea, a name shared by their daughter, as he walked through the preserve. President Clinton is on a 10-day, three country tour of Asia (Reuters photo)

Clinton calls for legal action on greenhouse gases

PORT DOUGLAS, Australia (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton Friday called for legally binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I call upon the community of nations to agree to legally binding commitments to fight climate change," Mr. Clinton said in an environment speech in a seaside park on Australia's tropical northeast coast.

"We must stand together against the threat of global warming," said Mr. Clinton on the second last day of his five-day visit to Australia.

"A greenhouse may be a good place to raise plants, but it is no place to nurture our children. And we can avoid dangerous global warming if we begin today and if we begin together," he said. "We must work to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions."

He said the 1987 Montreal Protocol had slowed production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), the "chemicals which have been eating a hole in the Earth's ozone layer."

"We are on our way to closing the ozone hole... Now we must see to it that this landmark treaty is enforced from one corner of the Earth to another," Mr. Clinton said.

"These gases released by cars and power plants and burning forests... are literally warming our planet. If they continue unabated the consequences will be nothing short of devastating for the children here in this audience and their children."

Mr. Clinton's call for

legally binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gases is in contrast to the U.S. stance at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 when Washington avoided such a stance.

Mr. Clinton also called for a reduction in global toxic waste.

"Toxic chemicals and pesticides found here and in the United States can still find their way into our lives, endangering our lives, our lands and our children," Mr. Clinton said.

"Let us now forge a global agreement to stop these toxic substances from being released into the world around us."

Mr. Clinton praised Australia for its efforts in protecting the world heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef system consisting of 2,600 reefs linked for 2,500 kilometres along the coast.

After the speech, Mr. Clinton boated out to the Great Barrier Reef, some 30 nautical miles offshore, to go swimming and snorkelling.

Mr. Clinton flies to the Philippines Saturday for next week's APEC summit. On Thursday, Mr. Clinton looked, and acted, as if he were a new father when he cradled Chelsea — a nine-month-old koala named after his daughter.

Grimacing at the throng of media gathered for "the shot" of his five-day Australian visit, Mr. Clinton talked softly to the tiny koala.

"Hey little guy meet your mommy," Mr. Clinton said to the koala as he faced "Chelsea" towards another

koala.

Mr. Clinton, who looked as if he may be blushing with pride, but was probably only red-faced from the tropical sun, told reporters: "She is beautiful."

"Most people only see pictures of koalas... I had no idea they were so soft," he told the White House press contingent.

Asked by one reporter what she thought of having a "critter" named after her 16-year-old daughter, Hillary Clinton smiled.

"We called her (Chelsea) this morning and told her we were going to see her namesake," Bill Clinton said.

The Clintons decided to visit a lush rainforest park — home to kangaroos, koalas and an assortment of birds.

As the Clintons strolled through the park near this north Queensland coastal town, a ranger answered their questions about Australia's unique marsupials, at one stage telling the president that large red kangaroos would tower over his big frame.

While both Clintons patted the friendly kangaroos, only the president decided to hand feed the animals compressed grain pellets from a brown paper bag.

"They are just so sweet looking. Look at their faces and eyes," said Hillary.

The kangaroos also charmed the White House press, who once the president had left, brought out their "happy snap" cameras for family album pictures of their encounter with the strange animals from "down under."

Belgian premier slammed for backing deputy in sex case

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene has been bitterly accused of putting the survival of his government before morality by openly backing his deputy Elio Di Rupo, alleged to have had sex with under-age boys.

"Pressure on your government and your deputy prime minister will not decrease but increase in coming days," said Patrick Dewael, parliamentary leader of the Flemish Liberal Party VLD which is Belgium's main opposition party.

With the centre-left coalition government sitting on a powder keg, parliament voted 103-20 Thursday in support of a special commission recommendation to continue enquiries into the charges, which Mr. Di Rupo denies.

"In view of the state of the judicial procedure it would be premature at this stage to take a political decision and (Di Rupo) retains my confidence," Mr. Dehaene told parliament.

"You are afraid Di Rupo's stepping down could spell the end of the government," Mr. Dewael said.

"If you say that your government can still operate normally, then you are either lying or you have no

feeling anymore with the outside world," said Annie Van De Casteele of the rightwing Volksunie.

Mr. Dehaene replied that Mr. Di Rupo, 45, had personally assured him the charges were baseless and that he could continue to carry out his ministerial duties.

If Mr. Di Rupo, a Francophone socialist, is forced to quit, the fate of the government hangs in the balance.

The commission's decision was reached only after Mr. Dehaene pressured his own Christian Democratic Party to support Mr. Di Rupo, one of the most popular and powerful politicians in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern half of Belgium.

Belgium's coalition government consists of the Francophone and Flemish Christian Democratic and Socialist parties.

"This is the umpteenth proof that you and your party are being held hostage by the PS (the Francophone Socialist Party)," Mr. Dewael said.

Mr. Dehaene said he welcomed parliament's decision to order enquiries to be completed by Dec. 9.

At the end of that period, with more information from

the Brussels public prosecutor, the commission will decide whether to recommend that parliament lift Mr. Di Rupo's immunity and send him before the court of cassation — Belgium's highest court.

On Thursday Belgian newspapers and some members of parliament questioned the reliability of the sole witness, now 22, against the minister.

Mr. Di Rupo will almost automatically be forced to quit if parliament lifts his immunity. Even if the case is thrown out he will be politically weakened — perhaps mortally wounded.

But opposition parties said Mr. Di Rupo had to step down now.

The whole political and judicial establishment are already under fire for ineptitude and suspected corruption after the discovery of a paedophile abduction and murder case and an unrelated political murder scandal three months ago.

The arrest in mid-August of convicted child rapist Marc Dutroux, the subsequent rescue of two sexually abused young girls from a house he owned and the discovery of the bodies of four more girls has shattered public confidence.

Australian 'misfit' killer jailed for life

HOBART, Australia (R) — An Australian court Friday sentenced Port Arthur killer Martin Bryant to life in jail for the shooting massacre of 35 people, deeming him a pathetic misfit who nursed a grudge against the world.

Judge William Cox in the Tasmanian Supreme Court ordered Bryant, 29, should be held in jail "for the term of his natural life", saying he feared the abnormal youth would forever remain a threat to society.

Bryant, who had confessed to unleashing modern Australia's worst mass murder among the ruins of an old penal colony in the state of Tasmania, told his lawyer later he was "happy" with the sentence, the attorney, John Avery, told reporters.

Mr. Avery said he then shared a can of Cola with his client in the court's holding cell.

But for Carolyn Loughton, who saw her 15-year-old daughter Sarah gunned down at the peak of the April 28 massacre, the crimes called for the return of the death penalty.

"I think that all Australians should now look at the debate on the reintroduction of capital punishment for mass murder," she told reporters in a voice choked with emotion.

"They can look at making it retrospective to the 28th of April 1996 because our lives have been destroyed and that man has had seven months more life than my daughter... He can rot in hell," she said.

In hearings this week, the court was told how Bryant killed 12 people in 15-second, shooting them as they sat having lunch in the cafe's crowded tourist cafe, ignoring pleas for mercy.

A total of 20 people died in the cafe, including Sarah Loughton, in what prosecutors called a slaughter. Bryant laughed as he walked from table to table shooting people in the head.

When Bryant was arrested the next morning after an all-night siege at a guesthouse near the Port Arthur ruins, another 15 people were dead, including a six-year-old girl executed as she hid behind a tree, her three-year-old sister and mother.

"Objectively, it is difficult to imagine a more chilling catalogue of crime," said Judge Cox as he passed sentence.

Judge Cox outlined how the massacre shocked the nation and its impact rippled out across the world. Four of the victims were Malaysian and Swiss tourists, and visitors from South Africa were among those who narrowly survived the rampage.

But Judge Cox said Bryant was incapable of understanding the feelings of other people, was close to being mentally disabled and should be pitied.

Grieving family tears as the dead wiped away by Bryant, who as usual seemed relaxed and willing to meet their stares from the public gallery, was taken from court for the last time.

"Perhaps the sentence is just in the eyes of the community, but it's little compensation for the family of the 35 victims," said Phillip Pears, brother of Glenn Bryant's final victim.

Tasmanian Premier Tony Rundle said it was now time for the traumatised island community to put the massacre behind it.

"I think we have to look forward... forgetting about an act we believed could never happen in our state," he said.

Bryant had the intellect of a child and appeared to suffer a rare and uncurable personality disorder similar in ways to autism, the court heard this week.

But psychiatric reports quoted in court said Bryant was not criminally insane.

World
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Belarus
handoff
A bitter dispute over the president's election in Belarus ended early Friday when the former Soviet leader, Alexander Lukashenko, refused to hand over power to the opposition. Lukashenko, who had won a landslide victory in the election, said he would remain in power. He accused the opposition of being a puppet of the West. The opposition, led by the late President's widow, Sviatlana Khanenko, said the election was rigged. She said Lukashenko had stolen the election. The dispute has led to a state of emergency in Belarus. The government has banned opposition rallies and arrested several leaders. The international community has expressed concern over the situation. The United Nations has called for a peaceful resolution. The European Union has threatened to suspend aid to Belarus. The situation remains tense.

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Russian mission defuses Belarus standoff

MINSK (R) — A bitter dispute between the president and parliament in Belarus that alarmed Europe ended in compromise early Friday after all-night talks led by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Moscow's intervention before a referendum Sunday in which President Alexander Lukashenko will be seeking much wider powers was apparently decisive in persuading the leader of the former Soviet state to soften his stance and defuse tension.

Mr. Lukashenko, Mr. Chernomyrdin, Belarus Parliament Speaker Semyon Sharetsky and the speakers of Russia's two houses of parliament signed the accord under which the president agreed to legislators' demands that the plebiscite not be legally binding.

Parliament, which by confronting the president had stirred memories of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's violent showdown with his own legislators in 1993, dropped impeachment moves against Mr. Lukashenko.

"This is a very important step. In simple terms, it marks the end to confrontation that the Belarus people have been waiting for," said Mr. Chernomyrdin, who had flown from Moscow Thursday night, apparently determined to defuse the conflict.

He admitted it had been tough. "The negotiations were very difficult," he told reporters. "I have not been involved in such an undertaking for 15 years."

The Russian premier, in the driving seat in Moscow as Mr. Yeltsin convalesces from heart surgery, appeared to have succeeded where months of increasingly ugly argument in Belarus had failed in getting Mr. Lukashenko, 42, to relent.

Parliamentarians had already offered their main concession — dropping the impeachment proceedings — earlier in the week.

But Mr. Lukashenko, confident of popular support in Sunday's voting, had refused point blank to make terms and threatened to dissolve parliament and the Constitutional Court, which backed legislators in saying the referendum was unconstitutional.

Mr. Sharetsky said Mr. Chernomyrdin, whose last high-profile peacemaking role was the Chechen hostage crisis at Budennovsk in July 1995, had helped strike a deal acceptable to both sides.

"No one won and no one lost. We sought and won a sensible compromise," the Belarus speaker said. "We could have come to this compromise ourselves but with the Russian participation it was easier and there was a guarantee."

Mr. Chernomyrdin said that a political treaty signed between Russia and Belarus last April meant that Moscow felt closely connected to the fate of its neighbor.

Russian legislators warned this week that Mr. Lukashenko, who won a landslide presidential election victory in 1994 on a programme of closer ties to Russia, risked destroying the two-state union if he failed to compromise with parliament.

"We also carry responsibility for the agreement which has been signed," Mr. Chernomyrdin said, but insisted that Russia took part only as mediator and did not force the deal.

Mr. Lukashenko said that, under the deal, the opposing political forces would work together on a new constitution, taking into account the results of the referendum planned for Sunday — a form of compromise parliament had already offered this week.



A woman sits near the victim of an explosion in a shoe store as a corpse in a body bag lies nearby Thursday. President Bill Clinton declared a state of emergency in Puerto Rico Thursday, ordering federal aid to supplement local recovery efforts after 20 people were killed and at least 80 injured in the collapse of an apartment building (Reuter photo)

U.S. blast rubble may hide 11 missing

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (R) — Emergency workers used heavy equipment early Friday to shore up the remains of a blasted-out building before they could resume the search for any survivors of an explosion that killed at least 20.

At least 11 people were missing and believed trapped within the chunks of twisted metal and concrete, according to police and government officials.

Some 80 people, many pedestrians on the busy street of the working-class neighbourhood, were treated for injuries and head wounds following the Thursday morning explosion.

The building was reduced to an empty shell when five floors of apartments and offices collapsed on a shoe store on the ground floor of the building in the busy Rio Piedras commercial district of San Juan.

Emergency workers were forced to halt their search for survivors Thursday evening, fearing for their own safety until the building could be shored up with steel beams. Faint voices had been heard by some bystanders soon after the explosion, but were not heard later in the day.

Trained search dogs and sophisticated equipment including fiberoptic cameras and listening devices were flown into San Juan by a team of rescue workers from Miami's Metro-Dade Fire Department. Officials hoped to resume the search for possible survivors by dawn.

"Everybody is just waiting for the street to get cleared," said Angel Delafuente, a member of the Miami Fire Department.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board, which probes U.S. airline accidents, were also dispatched to assist the Puerto Rican government with its investigation into the cause of the accident.

Early indications, and reports that residents had complained of a foul smell prior to the accident, pointed to a possible natural gas leak.

"The owners of the place were complaining that there was a smell for the past two weeks but they (the gas company) hadn't done anything. Today they came and when they were probing, the explosion occurred," Police Superintendent Pedro Toledo said.

"It is a very unfortunate event that has caused a lot of grief and suffering for families," said Gov. Pedro Rossello. "Our efforts must now be directed to attending to the injured and helping the families of those who died."

Gov. Rossello toured the site late Thursday night. He also thanked a group of black-habited nuns at a Catholic Church across the street for their lifesaving efforts. The nuns were among the people who rushed to the scene and pulled the injured and dead from the rubble.

A handful of relatives of the missing kept a vigil outside the police barricade throughout the night, watching as city workers used shovels and wheelbarrows to scoop up debris. Spotlights illuminated the area as engineers tried to put in place the steel support beams. "We have possibly 11 people under the cement. The problem is that we can't go in there because it's not secure," Mr. Toledo said.

Lourdes Perez stood as close as she could to the scene, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief. Her 19-year-old daughter, Karen, worked at the shoe store and was among the missing. "I've been waiting here since 9 this morning. I'll wait all night," she said.

Hong Kong fire claims 37 lives

HONG KONG (AFP) — Forensic scientists searched for clues Friday to identify the charred remains of people killed in a Hong Kong building fire, as police revised the death toll slightly downward, from 39 to 37 dead.

Meanwhile, a major blaze broke out in a commercial building, similar to the tower that caught fire Wednesday, but the flames were put out several hours later and there were no casualties.

A police spokesman said the forensic experts faced an uphill task, as the casualties were badly burned.

"In some cases there is very little left," he said.

Twenty-two of the fatalities worked at one of Hong Kong's most famous goldsmiths, Chow Sang Jewellery Co. Ltd., which had an administrative office in the building.

Police detectives were at work sifting through the blackened wreckage of the ill-starred Garley Commercial Building, a 16-storey, 30-year-old commercial and office building in Kowloon, the world's most densely-populated district.

"It will take some time to complete the identification process," the spokesman said. Relatives were being asked to give information such as dental records as well as blood for DNA tests.

The families of the six dead already identified, among them fireman Liu Chi-Hung, 36, have all been informed.

Emergency Services initially put the toll at 39 dead and police sources said early Friday that at least one missing person was still unaccounted for.

But Senior Superintendent Victor Lo later said a fuller investigation showed the death toll would probably be two fewer, at 37 dead.

"Up to this time, there has been a total of 37 missing persons reported," Mr. Lo said.

"Last night, a total of 33 bodies had been removed from the fire scene, so we are talking a possible four more unidentified casualties. Hopefully, this will be the size of the whole problem."

A government spokesman said 46 of the 81 injured in the fire were still in hospital, but their condition was not serious.

Initial investigations show that the fire may have been caused by sparks from welding being carried out by maintenance workers in the lift shaft, police said.

Nine fire engines Friday were called out to a blaze that swept through the uppermost floor of a 14-storey commercial building in Causeway Bay, on Hong Kong Island, officials said.

Acrid smoke billowed into the air after the fire broke out in a small plastics factory.

But the building was evacuated in time and there were no casualties, the Fire Service Department said.

The biggest fire toll of any type in Hong Kong's recorded history was in 1918, when 570 were killed after a temporary grandstand caught fire at Happy Valley Racecourse.

The disaster in Kowloon has prompted calls for Hong Kong to step up fire safety, particularly buildings that predate laws requiring post-1973 commercial rooms and offices to have sprinkler systems, wider fire exits and better access for the emergency services. There are around 700 buildings in Hong Kong of the approximate type and age of the Garley Commercial Building.

More Zaire upheaval as countries debate peace force

GOMA, Zaire (R) — Heavy fighting and large refugee movements were reported in eastern Zaire as countries backing an intervention force prepared to meet in Germany Friday to discuss options.

Some countries, including the United States, have scaled down their commitment after 500,000 refugees returned home to Rwanda. But renewed fighting, with refugees caught in the middle, might give fresh impetus to the Canadian-led mission.

The Friday meeting of military planners will not make any decisions on whether to send a force but a decision would come soon, Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said Thursday.

"There will not be a decision in Stuttgart. It is a meeting to look at all the factors and all the options, and after that there will be a context for a decision," Mr. Axworthy said.

Ray Wilkinson of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told reporters in Gisenyi, Rwanda, that UNHCR had reports of heavy fighting in Zaire Thursday, south of Minova on Lake Kivu, 20 kilometres south of Sake.

"This appears to confirm the reports we've had for the past four days of a large movement of refugees and Interahamwe from South Kivu towards Sake and the north," he said.

Zairean rebels ousted the Interahamwe — extremist Rwandan Hutu militias — and troops of the former Rwandan army along with refugees from camps in eastern Zaire in fighting that started in mid-October.

The refugees fled Rwanda in 1994 when a Tutsi-led army overran the country after the massacre of up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the Hutu extremists.

Some 500,000 have returned en masse to Rwanda from the Goma area, near Sake, over the past week to escape the new fighting.

Mr. Wilkinson said aid workers would have to contend with "an ongoing diaspora" with people heading in all directions. That seemed to be confirmed with the findings of satellite photos reported by the UNHCR in Geneva Thursday.

The United States Thursday suspended flights of unarmed military reconnaissance planes over Zaire after one came under anti-aircraft fire Wednesday. It was not hit.

UNHCR spokeswoman Melita Sunjic told Reuters an estimated 50,000 refugees had been located some 20 kilometres west of the Masisi region west of Goma. Another 100,000 had been spotted in an area north of Sake village near Masisi town.

Further south, the UNHCR had located some 200,000 refugees around 75 kilometres north of Bukavu and another 250,000 people 75 kilometres south of Bukavu, she said.

Deeper into Zaire, an estimated 100,000 refugees had been seen in the Fizi area some 100 kilometres south of Uvira.

U.N. spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said in New York these findings were the result of three separate surveys.

"And they all tally so we feel very comfortable about these numbers," she said. "We do know they are out there and are in need of assistance...They are not ghosts."

Yet another report suggested a group of 100,000 Hutus from Bukavu would flood over the border by the weekend.

A senior U.N. official in Kigali said: "There are around 100,000 refugees or so, located about 20 kilometres from Goma. We expect these people to be in Gisenyi Friday or Saturday."

The UNHCR's Wilkinson in Gisenyi said UNHCR staff in Goma were told by soldiers in command there to expect new refugees from the south in the next few days.

After reports of the heavy fighting in the Masisi region, the UNHCR workers had not been allowed by the rebels to leave either to the north or south Thursday, Mr. Wilkinson said.

Other reports, at odds with UNHCR details, spoke of a large group of refugees heading further and further west over the past three weeks towards Shabunda, 120 kilometres west of Bukavu.

And the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Thursday it had treated 300 wounded soldiers in the Zairean town of Kisangani, 460 kilometres northwest of Goma.

The statement provided evidence of the scale of fighting and level of casualties sustained by Rwandan Hutu extremists fleeing northwest after being driven from the refugee camps by the Zairean rebels.

Meanwhile, some 300 Burundians who were among the first wave of refugees returning from eastern Zaire, were massacred in a church in western Burundi on Oct. 22, a UNHCR spokeswoman said here Friday.

They had returned voluntarily to Mirambi in Cibitoke province and had spent the night in the church, Christiane Berthiaume of the UNHCR stated.

The identity of the killers was not known, Mr. Berthiaume said, but Burundi is wracked by a civil war between the army, dominated by the minority Tutsis, and Hutu rebels, who have been accused of launching attacks into their country from Zaire.

More than 50,000 Burundian Hutu refugees have returned to their homeland since mainly Tutsi Zairean rebels launched an uprising in eastern Zaire last month and went on to capture the key towns of Uvira, Bukavu and Goma, which were all hubs for refugee camps.

In June, three members of the ICRC were murdered in the province, provoking the aid agency to pull out. It had been the only organisation to remain in place.

Former Zaire premier claims post again

PARIS (AFP) — Zairean opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi claimed Friday that he had been named prime minister of a new government of national unity in Zaire in talks with the Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr. Tshisekedi, a former premier who was sacked by Mr. Mobutu and replaced by current Premier Kengo Wa Dondo, visited Mr. Mobutu Thursday and told Radio France Internationale Friday the meeting had led to a reconciliation and that Mr. Mobutu had agreed that he should lead a government of national unity.

But an aide to Mr. Mobutu, who is convalescing from cancer surgery in his private French Riviera villa, flatly denied the report, saying it would in any case be anti-constitutional.

"The president yesterday received him for more than an hour, and there was never any question of political problems," said Mobutu aide Honore Nghanza in an interview with the same radio station.

He explained that it would in any case be anti-constitutional for Mr. Mobutu to appoint a prime minister while outside the country.

"If that were to be done, it would happen in the country," he said.

"It would be anti-constitutional for a head of state, while outside the country, to meet a leader and decide to name him prime minister," he added.

Mr. Mobutu is currently recuperating in France from cancer surgery.

Asked whether he considered himself the new prime minister, Mr. Tshisekedi told Radio France Internationale: "Absolutely."

Asked whether Mr. Mobutu agreed to this he said:

Major blasts MPs over Sinn Fein meeting

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major accused some opposition parliamentarians Thursday of "stunning naivety" in allowing members of the IRA's political wing to roam around Britain's parliament building.

Mr. Major told the lower house of commons that some Labour legislators recently invited representatives of Sinn Fein to visit them without giving parliamentary authorities prior notice "and that they were from time to time left unattended."

But Ken Livingstone, one of the members of parliament involved, said it was ludicrous for a newspaper to suggest that senior officials of the outlawed Irish Republican Army, fighting to end British rule over Northern Ireland, had come to parliament to prepare for a bomb outrage.

"The idea that the IRA army council members would come to London actually to case the joint for bombing runs...These are the most wanted people in Britain, they would not risk them on that sort of exercise," he said.

The Independent newspaper reported that while the MPs were talking to the Sinn Fein officials in a cafeteria, one of them said he was going to the lavatory, and then disappeared for 20 minutes.

It said Britain's MI5 security service, alarmed that this unnamed individual suspected of being a member of the IRA's ruling army council, had complained to Labour.

But the home office, the government department responsible for MI5, denied this, saying security officers had not conducted surveillance within parliament.

Mr. Major said cabinet Minister Tony Newton had written to house of commons speaker Betty Boothroyd about the incident.

"I don't know what the outcome of this inquiry will be but I think it is swarming naivety of any member, not to realise the connection between Sinn Fein and the IRA," he said.

Labour's home affairs spokesman, Jack Straw, said the incident had been taken "very seriously indeed" by the party.

"It is a breach of the rules to leave guests unattended, whichever organisation they have come from. But obviously there are greater concerns about that if they do come from an organisation like Sinn Fein or the IRA," he told BBC radio.

Mr. Livingstone, a long-time supporter of a united Ireland, said Sinn Fein chairman Mitchel McLaughlin was accompanied on the visit by two party officials. One ran its London office and the other was its expert on British policy.

The three were met in the central lobby, where Britons go to see their MPs, and taken to a cafeteria, Mr. Livingstone said, adding: "These are places that virtually anybody can get into."

Police foil bomb attack in N. Ireland

BELFAST (R) — British forces defused a huge guerrilla car bomb left outside police headquarters in Northern Ireland's second city of Londonderry Thursday, police said.

"An army technical officer has successfully defused a large car bomb outside strand road police station," a police spokesman told Reuters. The bomb weighed 600 pounds (275 kilos).

Hundreds of premises around the police building in the mostly Catholic city were evacuated.

The BBC said that bomb disposal officers used a robot to set off a controlled explosion and remove bags of explosives.

Earlier, a telephone caller purporting to speak for a hardline republican group, the Irish Continuity Army Council, told news media that its members had planted the device.

It was the second major guerrilla alert within a week in Londonderry, which has been largely quiet since the outlawed Irish Republican Army and pro-British "loyalist" guerrillas declared truces two years ago.

The Continuity Army Group had previously claimed responsibility for planting a car bomb in Belfast in July which was blown up in a controlled explosion by the army.

They were also held responsible for the bomb which wrecked the Killyhelvin Hotel in Enniskillen and injured 17 people in July. The continuity army is believed to be the military wing of republican Sinn Fein, a hardline group which broke away from Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, in 1986.

The incident further dampened hopes for a return to peace in the province and raised fears about whether the "loyalist" truce would hold. The IRA, the main republican guerrilla group, ended its 17-month truce last February, setting off bombs in mainland Britain and at military bases in Germany and Northern Ireland.

Multi-party talks on Northern Ireland's political future are bogged down. Strenuous political efforts are being made to win a new IRA truce but Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said he had no information about whether such a ceasefire was imminent.

"We are all working very hard to see if we can bring about a cessation of violence," Mr. Spring said late Wednesday after three hours of talks with Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew.

Concern has been expressed by protestant "loyalist" groups that multi-party talks might soon collapse because of problems over the key issue of arms "decommissioning."

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, says that it is pursuing a peace strategy and wants to get into all-party talks, but Britain and Ireland insist on an IRA guerrilla truce first.

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Building block of democracy

A ROUND-TABLE debate held last Wednesday by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights and the Al Riadah Centre for Information and Research on the draft law for the establishment of the Centre for Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights has turned out to be inconclusive. It was obvious from the discussions and earlier deliberations on the proposed centre that there was a stand-off between two different schools of thoughts. The first aims to create an effective centre which enjoys sufficient powers and jurisdiction to address human rights violations in a meaningful way.

The second prefers to limit the authority of the centre to conducting research and merely receiving and forwarding complaints on human rights issues. Other points of debate included such questions as to whether to establish the centre by issuing a special law or have it created on the strength of the existing laws on national associations and organisations.

In all cases, the controversy seems to centre on the mission of the forum and the degree of its independence, immunity from interference and authority to act effectively within the confines of its mandate. We doubt that His Majesty the King, who had issued a Royal Decree nearly four years ago to set up the centre, wanted it simply to be a study group with limited powers to address human rights problems. Had this been the case, there would have been no reason for a Royal Decree to establish it in the first place. We believe therefore that the Monarch aimed for something much larger and effective when he appointed a 19-member committee made up of eminent Jordanian personalities to study the project and draft appropriate legislation on it.

There is a plurality in Jordan today on the need to bolster democracy. The establishment of an independent machinery to deal effectively with human rights issues through research and investigation, on the one hand, and judicial authority to act effectively on violations, on the other, is an important step in that direction.

But as long as there is no meeting of the minds between the two schools of thought on the broad outlines of the forum, there can be little likelihood of speeding up action on it. The fact that follow-up work has been sluggish since February 1993 proves that ideas on it have yet to crystallise fully. Till that happens, the existing logjam is destined to continue.

To end this division, there is an urgent need for the exercise of a political will to overcome the stalemate. Last week's round-table deliberations helped develop thoughts, but only a full parliamentary debate can break the deadlock. Above all the government is called upon to articulate its position more clearly, even though the prime minister did well to push the draft law on it earlier on in his tenure. The King has stressed the importance of establishing the centre. Its benefits cannot be overemphasised. With this in mind, nothing justifies the delay in setting up and making it fully operational.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE INTOLERABLE environmental situation at the old phosphate mines in Ruseifah was discussed by Nuzhi, a columnist for Al Ra'i daily. The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company had long abandoned the Ruseifah mines and turned its attention to mining the mineral in the south of the country, but left behind a dangerous site for the neighbouring town of Ruseifah and its residents who continue to inhale the phosphate dust and smell the stench of fermenting garbage that has been accumulated on the site, said the writer. The company had earlier contracted the Royal Scientific Society to conduct a study on how to terminate the source of sufferings for the Ruseifah people. The study was prepared but no action to implement the recommended measures has been taken, noted the writer. He said that the Ruseifah Municipality has been trying its best to deal with the situation and end the pollution which is harmful to the townspeople, but it seems that the municipality's financial resources are not sufficient to handle this serious issue. The writer said that the government must intervene and allocate the necessary funds to deal with pollution and protect the environment and the lives of the local population.

A WRITER for Al Dustour accused ministers who are also members of parliament of exploiting their executive authority position for election purposes and called for an end to the practise of appointing deputies as government ministers. Bassam Haddadin said also that the independent deputies who participate in governments are not affiliated to any political party and are not restricted by any political group's ideas and so they have no one to hold them accountable for their action as they naturally side with the government and support the prime minister's policies. The writer said that preventing deputies from becoming ministers is the appropriate solution for this problem because, in such a situation, the government will not be relying on support from ministers who also serve as deputies in the House to secure backing for all its policies and programmes. The writer, who is also member of parliament, expressed hope that no deputy will be made a government minister after the 1997 general elections so that parliament work will be free of any outside influences.

Jordanian Perspective

Aid to Palestinians — needed and rightfully scrutinised

By Dr. Musa Keilani

IT IS heartening to note that the donor community did not hesitate to respond positively to the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) request for financial assistance at the Paris meeting last week and readily pledged some \$845 million to help it. The pledge was a resounding affirmation of the international community's commitment to support the Middle East peace process and anxiety to ensure that the Palestinians succeed in their endeavours to establish their own entity after decades of struggle with Israel.

Having said that, however, we cannot but note that making pledges is one thing and fulfilling them is something else. We saw the world community pledging nearly \$2.5 billion to help the Palestinians in October 1993, but have also seen the reluctance of many governments to actually allocate the funds to fulfill the promise. Reasons given for the hesitancy ranged from demands for "transparency" and "good governance" to an argument that the Palestinian territories did not have the ability to absorb any sizeable amount of funds without dire negative consequences as high inflation and resulting impact on the daily life of the Palestinians.

While we appreciate some of the arguments, as based on sound economic policies proven in other parts of the world, we cannot but wonder whether a concerted move was exerted to explore what precise means were available to ensure that the Palestinians did in fact benefit from international funds without inflating the economy (let us not forget that expatriate remittances were the main means which helped a majority of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza survive over these years).

We have also seen that a part of the international pledges of aid to the Palestinians is not new money; it represents the amounts that some governments have been giving to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and non-governmental organisations that help the Palestinians. Effectively, those contributions have been there for many years and they should not be seen as fresh commitments by the donors.

We have also noted that the donor community has been very slow in responding to the PNA's repeated requests to bridge its budget deficit. The argument in this case had always been that the world cannot and should not pay for the current expenses of running the PNA, such as paying for the police force and other administrative costs of operating the self-rule government. But then we find this baffling, given that the PNA has yet to set up an effective taxation system and means of collecting revenues, given the peculiar features of the Israeli occupation. Israeli soldiers might have withdrawn from many parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but the salient features of occupation, such as control of border points, remain very much in place. The continuing closure of the territories is another major hurdle in the PNA's efforts to bring about an effective financial administration. As such, it is imperative that the donor community and the World Bank, which is directly in charge of administering international aid to the PNA, move with a little more imagination to help the self-rule government meet its obligations in the interim.

For its part, the PNA has to tighten its monitoring of how international funds are spent in the Palestinian territories.

Regardless of all arguments, it is clear that there is a pattern of misuse of funds, including corruption and bribery, among some PNA officials. The authority itself admitted as much four months ago by detaining some PNA officials and firing some others in response to mounting evidence that the self-rule authority did have some of the features of a typical Third World oligarchy (a close look at how some of the officials at various levels of the PNA have become wealthy overnight should prove the point).

Needless to say, signs of corruption and misuse of funds are indeed very disturbing to the donor community, which, more often than not, completely shuts off the flow of assistance until the situation is satisfactorily addressed. The situation in the Palestinian territories has not reached that point yet, but unless the PNA moves firmly to stamp out corruption, bribery and misuse of funds, no matter the volume of funds involved, it may have to answer tough questions from the donors.

The most salient point in international aid to the Palestinians is that everything that the recipients do is under close scrutiny from every quarter: not necessarily because of suspicions but because of the importance the world attaches to the emergence of an efficient and successful Palestinian state administration that could, at some point, shoulder the heavy responsibilities of running an independent entity with all that it entails. As such, it is as important for the Palestinians to streamline their administrative and financial affairs as to insist on Israeli respect for their political and territorial rights.

Dumping Boutros Ghali is bad business for America

By A.M. Rosenthal

NEW YORK — For a country as for a business, to take a major gamble with no sign of gain and a plain warning of loss is gross mismanagement — squandering assets for no reason other than to save management ego.

The Clinton administration took such a gamble with its decision not only to dump Secretary-General Boutros Ghali but also to subject him and the United Nations' majority that supports him to two things that linger a long time: insult and humiliation.

The bill for the first installment of the price was presented when for the only time in the half-century history of the United Nations the United States was itself dumped — from the important panel of financial experts of the U.N. budgetary committee.

One reason was that the United States is the champion U.N. debtor — \$1.4 billion in arrears, a year's budget for the whole organisation.

U.S. deadbeating has been going on for years, but Washington was allowed to keep that seat. This time the vote reflected the anger of most U.N. members at the decision to mug the secretary-general.

The only way to rescue American policy is for the president to listen to important allies and the major American organisations that are pleading with him to recognise a mistake while there is time — days or weeks.

The administration turned against Dr. Ghali because it worried that Bob Dole might win votes with his campaign against the United Nations. Mr. Dole singled out Dr. Ghali, mocked him and pictured him as a world commander ordering American troops into combat.

No secretary-general can send any troops into action. That is the decision of the members. For decades, troops of U.N. members supported actions that the United States considered in its vital interests, from Korea to the Gulf, Bosnia and Haiti.

Instead of focusing on that truth, Washington sacrificed Dr. Ghali. In June, six months before a U.N. vote could take place and without international consultation, it announced that it would veto his reelection. Only the Soviet Union has ever used the veto to block reelection of a secretary-general — in 1950 against Trygve Lie of Norway, and

to American contempt. More than any other secretary-general, Dr. Ghali moves easily among the U.N. cultures. As an Egyptian, he considers himself a Middle Easterner and an African. He draws from Islam, his own Christianity, his wife's Jewish origin and his attachment to Western culture.

As a top diplomat, he took part in historic Arab-Israeli events, including President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the Camp David talks. He has tried more than any of his predecessors to reform the U.N. administration. A secretary-general heads the U.N. staff, serves all nations, but has the right to present major issues to the United Nations on his own. His duties are political as well as administrative. Dr. Ghali has critics.

Friends of Tibetan freedom, like myself, object deeply to his refusal to allow Tibetan representatives to enter the U.N. headquarters, because of China's hostility. Others resent his refusal to become a docile camp follower in Bosnia, of the West or the combatants.

But only Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden earned as much respect as this secretary-general.

In America, letters of embracing support for Dr. Ghali have gone to Bill Clinton from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the office representing Anglican churches in 164 nations, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S. and the Coptic Orthodox Churches.

Abroad, leaders of Western, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries have written to Dr.

Ghali urging compromise — Germany, France, Canada, Egypt, Honduras and others. As I wrote this column, a letter about the secretary-general arrived unexpectedly from Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem, saying he knew nobody better for the job.

The acceptable solution would be to extend him for two more years instead of the usual five. That would give him time to finish the reform work he has started and to ease the anger of the U.N. majority.

Most important, agreement by Mr. Clinton would show that America has not taken leave of common sense, self-interest or a decent respect for the right and opinions of friends.

International Herald Tribune

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Parliament, faced with challenging tasks, should work in earnest

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE LOCAL dailies in the past week tackled corruption. Parliament and the elections law, among different domestic issues, and discussed the Palestinian question and the U.S. battle against the U.N. secretary general.

Mohammad Subeithi, a writer for Al Dustour, criticised the way the government is handling corruption cases, saying that nothing is revealed to the public except that the government is going ahead with plans to uproot corruption.

The government could indeed be taking measures to deal with corruption, but so far the public has heard nothing about these measures although people are yearning to learn about progress achieved in this matter and the corrupt people who should be exposed and punished to serve as a lesson for others, said the writer.

Rumours are rampant that the government is cracking down on small employees and small merchants who have been involved in corruption cases, but nothing is being done against those who mastermind corruption, said the writer.

He said the public has the right to know the facts and the results of the investigations. Sultan Hattab discussed the same topic, saying that the public can no more tolerate acts by corrupt people, especially those in official positions.

So much dirt has been swept under the carpet, with the result that a large heap of garbage has accumulated, and the time has come for clearing away the rubbish, said the writer.

It is a battle against corruption and the corrupt people, but the government

should wage this battle with wisdom and tactfulness so that the actual corrupt people receive retribution and no adverse results emerge from such a battle.

The writer said that the battle against corruption has been delayed for so long and the time has come for the culprits and the corrupt to face penalties and prosecution.

Hussein Abu Rumman, a writer for Al Ra'i, tackled the task awaiting the final session of the 12th parliament, saying that the agenda abounds with so much work that the country cannot tolerate any waste of time.

The session is limited in its duration, said the writer who stressed that any waste of time on lengthy speeches and rhetoric can achieve nothing and will only delay the endorsement of draft laws.

The deputies should realise that they have a serious responsibility at hand and ought to act accordingly; they should also realise that democracy means accepting the voice of the majority, with respect to the views of the minority.

He said the sessions of the 12th parliament are facing challenges represented in the big number of draft laws on the agenda and the need to deal with issues of national interest.

A writer for Al Dustour criticised the "quota" system in parliament, specifically stressing that women should not be offered preferential treatment.

The idea of giving women a quota in parliament is obsolete and does not reflect fair representation of the public, said Mohammad Daoud.

Women, like men, should have equal opportunity in running as candidates for parliament and the voters should have freedom to

choose the best men or women for the job, he added.

Referring to the quota seats given to the Christian and Circassian minorities, the writer said that this system is being phased out and should no more exist.

The writer said if a woman is worthy of public trust, she will be elected to parliament if she decides to run. Deputies, whether men or women, represent the whole population and not a specific district and therefore, he added, the quota system should disappear and give way to fair and free representation.

Hamadeh Faraneh, another writer for Al Dustour, commented on information Minister Marwan Muasher's recent remarks that the government is determined to retain the one-person, one-vote system in the general elections, saying that while Jordanians accept the system, they also demand that certain amendments be introduced to ensure fairness.

It is not reasonable to have equal number of seats in parliament for the representation of districts of 10,000 and 50,000 people, he said, adding that people will be more willing to go to the polls and take part in the general elections if the elements of fairness and justice are respected.

The writer said that each of the 12 electorate districts could have a minimum number of seats, say three, as a rule, and additional seats in accordance with the size of the electorate in a particular district.

Yusef Abdullah Mahmoud, a writer for Al Ra'i, attacked a decision by an Israeli court allowing the Israeli authorities the right to torture Arab detainees in the course of their interrogation.

The writer said physical torture to force detainees to confess is an act that violates all international rules and human rights. There is no doubt that such methods are bound to result in the detainees giving, more often than not, misleading information about their resistance colleagues and their leaders, added the writer.

He said such action is inhuman and has been condemned by all human rights groups, even those operating in Israel itself, because torture could also be practised against innocent detainees.

The writer said that torturing of human beings contravenes all religious teachings and human principles. Writing under the title "The Palestine state is coming", Sultan Hattab said that the Palestinians should not despair but maintain the struggle for freedom despite intensified Israeli atrocities against them.

The Palestinians have waged a hard struggle to regain their rights and ensure their freedom while the occupation authorities have been obstructing their path.

He said that despite repression, the occupation forces cannot prevent the Palestinians from achieving their national objectives. Now that the Palestinians, through their presence on Palestinian land, have succeeded in wresting part of their rights, nothing should deter them from pursuing the struggle to attain all their rights in full, but more sacrifices have to be made if they are determined to continue building the independent Palestine state.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i, commented on Washington's objection to the United Nations' renewing the

mandate of Boutros Ghali as secretary general of the world organisation.

He said the U.S. is behaving as if the U.N. belongs to it and is trying to impose its will and views on all its members.

By deliberately failing to pay its dues to the world organisation and by insisting on having its own hand-picked men to assume the position of secretary general, Washington is trying to further prove that it controls the destiny of this organisation and wishes to transform it into an American department that carries out orders from the White House.

Washington now stands against the whole world, regarding renewing Mr. Ghali's mandate, although, said the writer, Mr. Ghali never stood against America's desires at the Security Council.

The writer said that the U.S.'s attitude is clearly directed not against Mr. Ghali but rather against the whole world community.

LETTERS

Taking the lead

To the Editor:

I WAS pleasantly surprised to read the terrific words of Her Majesty Queen Noor's speech to the World Food Summit in Rome: "Empowering women, rural communities can be instrumental in responding to some major national and global challenges." (Jordan Times, Nov. 16, 1996).

Arab women are obviously moving ahead of those in the West: they took the lead in showing the world how to attain peace and, now, came with down to earth suggestions on how to feed the population of that world, a task which, as many others, relies on womenfolk.

Right from conception it has been women's "labour" which brought to life, fed and nurtured the inhabitants of this world. Men, of course, have realised this but deemed it wise not to admit and lose their status in society.

Jordan is becoming a model to the rest of the world in several ways, seemingly taking advantage of what it has learned from the mistakes of the more developed countries.

I hope it will continue that way, accepting the hiccups but knowing the general direction is sound.

Paul Saint, Aqaba.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Mars — source of life on Earth?

By Paul Davies

NASA'S SENSATION-AL announcement of evidence for Martian microfossils signals a dramatic U-turn in scientific opinion about the Red Planet. Twenty years ago scientists had all but written off Mars as an abode for life following the Viking Lander missions. Samples of Martian topsoil scooped up by the Viking craft failed to show any convincing signs of organic activity. Moreover, the surface temperature and atmospheric pressure turned out to be dismally low. In short, Mars looked to be a sterile, forbidding planet.

Now scientists are questioning this negative conclusion. Even before the recent announcement, sentiment was shifting. Several Mars experts have for some time been expressing cautious optimism that Mars may once have harboured life. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Martian microbes may still survive today, deep beneath the surface.

One reason for this change of heart was the discovery of life in some unusual places on Earth. In the late 1970s biologists were astonished to find organisms living on the ocean floor, several kilometres down, in the super-heated water close to hot volcanic vents. Here there is no sun-light, and the temperatures can be well above 100 degrees Celsius. The fluids erupting from the vents are richly laced with sulphurous and other chemicals that would kill most familiar organisms in pretty short order. Yet there are microbes — thermophiles — that positively thrive under these extreme conditions.

Thermophiles are independent of the food and energy chain that sustains surface life. Instead, they make a living from the hot chemical broth that vomits from the vents. This prolific source of energy supports an entire ecology that includes crabs and tube-worms several metres long.

The deep-ocean thermophiles, together with their microbial cousins living in the boiling geysers of Yellowstone National Park, are no evolutionary quirks. Indeed, there could be thousands of different species of these microbes. They are so weird that they form a separate kingdom of life in their own right, called

archaea. Many biologists think the archaea closely resemble the Earth's earliest living organisms.

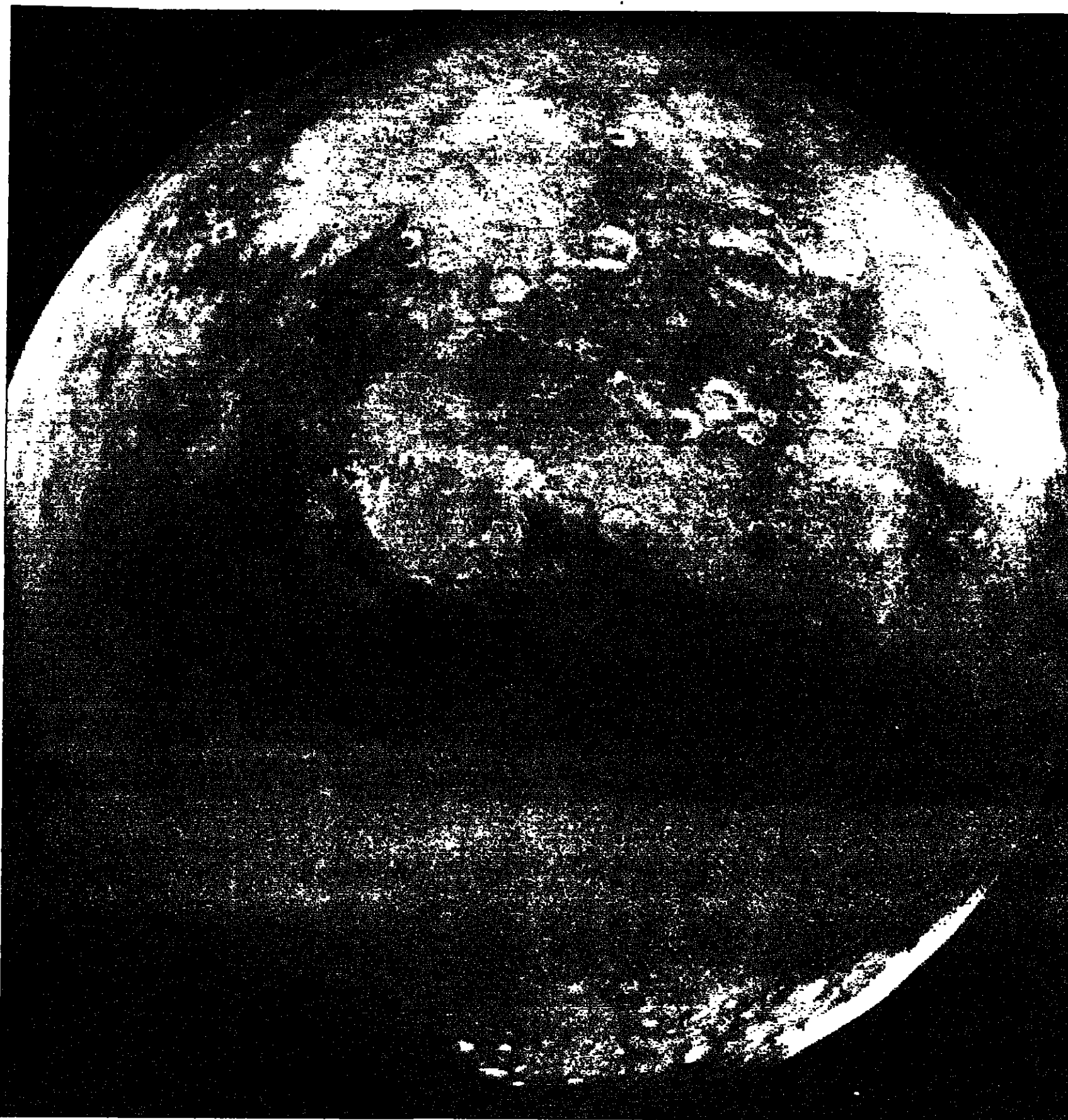
But this is not all. Deep drilling projects in the ocean floor, and also beneath the continents, have revealed traces of microbes in the crust of the Earth itself. Evidence is accumulating of an entire underworld of exotic life-forms, with microbes teeming in the hot rocks beneath our very feet.

The importance of this discovery for Mars is that similar conditions are likely to have prevailed beneath the Martian surface too during its 4.5-billion-year history. Photographs show ancient river systems on Mars, including huge canyons and deltas cut by running water. Geologists suspect that massive flash floods were caused by volcanoes melting underground ice deposits. The combination of volcanic activity and water could have created a perfect environment for Martian thermophiles.

"Photographs show ancient river systems on Mars, including huge canyons and deltas cut by running water. Geologists suspect that massive flash floods were caused by volcanoes melting underground ice deposits."

However, suitable conditions are one thing, the actual emergence of life quite another. Biologists still have scant idea how life originated. Darwin suggested it started in a "warm little pond" on the Earth's surface. The favoured theory is that chemical self-organisation occurred in a soup of organic compounds, creating molecules of greater and greater complexity, until the first truly self-replicating molecule was produced.

The trouble is, nobody knows how long this prebiotic phase lasted, or whether the first organism formed on the Earth's sur-



The Red planet's mystery: Earth and Mars may well have cross-fertilised each other

face, in the hot underworld, or somewhere else entirely. Also, scientists are sharply divided over whether the formation of life was a completely freak occurrence, unique in the universe, or a more or less inevitable result given the right conditions. Curiously, even if life on Earth is a squillion-to-one freak occurrence, we cannot rule out life on Mars. Over the last decade or so, geologists have become convinced that a handful of mete-

orites found on Earth originated on the planet Mars. In fact, a fragment of one such Martian meteorite has been in the possession of the University of Adelaide for years. The meteorite in the news, containing possible microfossils, was recovered in 1986 from the Antarctic ice sheet.

It may seem baffling that chunks of Mars are found right here on Earth. How do they get here? The answer is simple. Every few million years

Mars gets slammed by an asteroid or comet with enough force to blast rocks into space. You can see the craters clearly in satellite photos, peppering the Martian landscape. Over the aeons the ejected fragments become strewn around the solar system. Some inevitably get swept up by other planets as they orbit the Sun. It has been estimated that 500 kilograms of Martian material strikes the Earth every year. The same process is bound to

happen in reverse: big impacts with Earth eject debris into space, some of which will reach Mars. So it seems as if rocky material is continually being exchanged between the planets.

During the first billion years of their 4.5-billion-year history, the planets would have been subjected to a much more intense cosmic bombardment. Rocks and boulders must have travelled in profusion between Earth and Mars.

The significance of this discovery for life on Mars is obvious. If Earth's rocks harbour microorganisms, then material displaced into space by impacts could convey live microbes to the Red Planet, whereupon they may emerge and colonise their new home. Cocooned within a rock, a microbe would be shielded from the ultra-violet and cosmic radiation of outer space. In spore-like form, it might remain viable almost indefinitely. To

whether life originated on Earth or Mars, or on both independently. It may turn out that Mars was the more favourable location. In which case we would all be descended from Martians.

Paul Davies is Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Adelaide, and is currently writing a book about life on Mars. This article is reprinted from the Observer.

Tehran sits in dirty air

From the Economist

TEHRAN — As her father pushes her between ten lanes of traffic on a road designed for six, the small girl in the wheelbarrow is choking on some of the worst air in Asia: that of Tehran, which has grown in 50 years from 300,000 people to 7.5m. Concentrations of nasty gases are recorded at 20 times the level that the World Health Organisation says is acceptable. And since Tehran sits in a bowl of hills, the dirty air just sits on Tehran.

Cars contribute nearly three-quarters of the pollution. Thanks to the American planners and engineers who worked with the Shah, Tehran is one of the most car-dependent cities outside the United States. The Islamic revolution has blown away the ideology of the Great Satan, but not its smog. Little has been done to cope with Tehran's continued growth.

There are well over 1m private cars in the city, about half of them Paykans, a local version of Britain's long-vanished Hillman Hunter, little modified in the past 30 years. Import restraints and the uncertain political climate let few newer models enter the

country. Efforts at local assembly by Peugeot and some other foreign makers are still pretty small.

The Paykan burns fuel enthusiastically and puffs out dirt. To its owner, neither matters: even after a 30 per cent rise this year, petrol is still subsidised down to the equivalent of 16 cents a gallon, less than the production cost. So why switch off or get the engine tuned?

Yet attitudes are slowly changing: the Tehran press increasingly features concern about the effect of air-pollution on children's health. Officialdom, officially, sees its reduction as a priority. In practice, institutional in-fighting, shortage of finance, and the subsidy system have so far stopped anything much being done.

Last year, Tehran's energetic mayor, Gholam Hossein Karbaschi, pushed through a programme that converted 5,000 of the city's 22,000 public taxis to liquefied petroleum gas, less polluting than petrol or diesel. But the 40,000 private taxis, almost all of them Paykans, plying an unregulated (and very useful) trade, are not subject to the programme. A scheme to convert the

city's overworked fleet of buses to compressed natural gas, another less polluting fuel, is at last about to begin. In June, Iran's parliament signed the global framework convention on climatic change, and environmental funds administered by the World Bank will become available.

Meanwhile, a body called the Air Quality Control Company, attached to the municipality, has got \$2m from the Japanese to coordinate some sort of master plan. It will also spend around \$4m (half of it from the World Bank money) on an emission-reduction project. Reports from both schemes emphasise the need for better public transport and restrictions on private cars.

Neither, however, is likely. There is little money for public transport. And restrictions on car-owners run into various forms of bloody-mindedness. When the mayor installed parking meters throughout the city, the traffic police, who come under the interior ministry, refused to monitor them, because ministry and municipality could not agree on who should collect the takings and the fines.

The Economist

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Inter-Arab cooperation given new dimension at Cairo summit, Jordanian officials say

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Among the main conceptual achievements of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference held in Cairo this month was strengthening moves towards inter-Arab economic ties but the idea needs to be bolstered more, according to Jordanian officials who attended the meeting.

At the same time, increasing inter-Arab trade, which accounts for less than seven per cent of all trade involving Arab countries, is difficult simply because the Arab World does not have what most Arab countries want, they said.

Jordan presented itself well at the conference in terms of its economic course and the investment climate in the Kingdom and it now hopes to see resultant moves materialising into foreign capital but it is a process that would take time, they said.

Taleb Rifai, head of the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC), and Yousef Mansour of the Ministry of Planning were addressing a media forum organised by the United States Information Agency (USIA) at the American centre on Wednesday. The forum was also addressed by George Hismeh of the USIA. Apkar Hagopian of the USIA moderated the discussions.

A key idea that emerged from the forum was that the Cairo conference had sent a strong message to Israel that it could not hope to integrate itself to the regional economic order along with the Arabs without meeting the political requirements for the success of the Middle East peace process.

It was also made clear at the conference that regional economic cooperation does not simply mean the integration of Israel into the region and that the focus was the rehabilitation of the region's economies in general, said Dr. Rifai.

Dr. Rifai and Dr. Mansour said it would be illogical to ponder whether the conference was a success or a failure for anyone simply because there was no parameter to arrive at such conclusions.

"There is no balance sheet to figure out who got what out of the conference in figures," said Dr. Rifai, noting that contracts signed on the fringes of the gathering were not the immediate outcome of negotiations held there.

"The agreements and deals signed in Cairo were in the pipeline for one year or even perhaps more but were brought together to give an additional focus to the conference," he said. "Such agreements could have been signed one month earlier or one month later."

Apart from the regional countries attending the conference being able to present themselves as attractive havens for investments and launching contacts among private sector busi-

nessmen participants, the Cairo meeting served as a forum to advance the quest for inter-Arab cooperation.

"The conviction that the Arab region's economies need to be rehabilitated was given a new dimension in Cairo," said Dr. Rifai. Noting that the concept itself was not new, he added that the conviction needs to be matured more.

Perhaps the next conference could produce better results, he added.

According to Dr. Mansour, increasing inter-Arab trade does not exactly present the right answer for bolstering inter-Arab economic cooperation.

"The kind of (goods and services) that Arab countries need is not simply available in other Arab countries," he noted, referring to "advance technology and equipment which are mostly available in the West."

Dr. Mansour also pointed out that the main line of inter-Arab trade was raw materials.

Also pointed out during Wednesday's meeting was that Arab funds invested in non-Arab countries were estimated at \$750 billion. Arguments were also heard that part of the funds could be repatriated if the Arab governments made the right moves but also that such moves were more political than economy-related.

There was consensus that Egypt made the best out of the conference by virtue of its being the host and that the forum was rather well-organised and well-attended.

Mr. Hismeh, who attended the first and second MENA conferences held in Casablanca and Amman in 1994 and 1995 respectively, said one notable feature of the Cairo meeting was the high number of participants. According to figures widely heard in Cairo, the conference was attended by 1,500 Arab and foreign businessmen in addition to 500 from Egypt and 1,000 plus official delegates representing governments and organisations as well as nearly 1,000 media representatives.

Also cited at Wednesday's forum was an Egyptian assertion that its public and private sector were involved in deals worth \$10 billion that were signed on the fringes of the meeting.

But no Egyptian official or any other delegate or organisation, including the World Economic Forum (WEF) which organised the event, could provide details of the purported deals except for a \$2 billion to \$3 billion gas supply agreement between Egypt and Turkey.

Palestinian official sees gross domestic product down 11 per cent in 1996

BEIRUT (R) — Palestinian real gross domestic product is expected to fall 11 per cent to about \$1.9 billion in 1996 from \$2.161 billion in 1995 due to the closure imposed by Israel, a senior Palestinian official has said.

Fouad Bseiso, head of the Palestine Monetary Authority (central bank) said that according to IMF estimates real gross national product in the self-rule areas would fall even more sharply, by 17 per cent to about \$2.38 billion from \$2.869 billion in 1995.

Dr. Bseiso told Reuters in an interview that unemployment, estimated at 60 per cent in Gaza Strip and 40 per cent in the West Bank, was threatening to cause a new explosion of violence.

"We have an army of unemployed people in the Palestinian territories and the hardship has touched the red line which no Palestinian is ready to go

beyond, Palestinians are growing impatient and threaten an explosion," he said.

"The Israeli policies are choking the Palestinian economy and unless drastic changes are introduced the situation will explode, bringing down with it the achievements of the peace process," Dr. Bseiso said.

The closures imposed by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1994 had pulled down real per capita income of Palestinians by 20 per cent in 1996 to \$600.

Israel imposed a four-month closure earlier this year after militants carried out four suicide bombings in February and March that killed 59 people. The closure has since been eased but tough restrictions remain.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Wednesday the autonomous Palestinian areas were losing \$7 million a day because of

the closure.

The Palestinian banking sector has also suffered from the Israeli policy which restricted movement of staff and currency across the territories.

"We are trying to convince the Bank of Israel to provide in coordination with security authorities some guarantees for freely continued banking activities," Dr. Bseiso said.

Out of 17 banks operating in the self-rule areas, only four are Palestinian. Three other local banks are expected to open in a few months, he said.

In September 1996, the capitalisation of the banking sector stood at \$133.7 million and total assets reached \$2 billion, an increase of 44 per cent from \$1.4 billion in December 1995.

The increase came from heavy injection of Palestinian deposits into local banks immediately after

Palestinians took control of the sector in December 1995.

Dr. Bseiso said the trade deficit would further widen at the end of 1996. In 1995, the Palestinian territories imported goods worth \$1.47 billion against exports of \$304 million. Imports from Israel in 1995 totalled \$1.15 billion, up 37 per cent from a year earlier.

"Israelis are handicapping our trade channels with the Arab countries and the rest of the world," he said.

This left the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) with the difficult task of strengthening the productive capacity of the local economy in the absence of a secured investment environment and with delays in donor countries fulfilling their pledges of aid.

"We are providing the legal and institutional frameworks for such development through a flexible investment law and a newly-established investment authority," Dr. Bseiso said.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NUG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5054	0.6954	1.2885	111.33	1.3390	1504.34	1.6890	5.1042
DE Mark	0.6643	1.0000	0.3360	0.4833	37.45	0.6558	8.3333	0.6366	1.9360
GB Sterling	1.4376	2.5294	1.0000	2.1310	166.38	2.2489	2327.29	2.8375	8.7511
CHF Franc	0.7683	1.0402	0.2070	1.0000	103.47	1.0647	1164.71	1.3235	4.0608
JP Yen	0.0090	0.0027	0.0060	0.0027	1.0000	0.0074	0.0080	0.0074	0.0094
CAD Dollar	0.7448	1.1101	0.4455	0.9339	136.44	1.0000	1123.86	1.3883	3.7688
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0006	0.3354	0.4844	1350.44	0.8900	1.0000	1.123	3.3914
NUG Gulden	0.5921	0.8844	0.3352	0.4844	1350.44	0.8900	1.0000	1.123	3.3914
FR Franc	0.1939	0.2949	0.1165	0.1663	21.83	0.2623	33.09	33.0900	100.00

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
Brent	21.95	23.70	10.45	11.50	1150.00	SA Riyal	0.2658	0.4017	0.3385
WTI	21.95	23.70	10.45	11.50	1150.00	AE Dirham	0.2725	0.4104	0.3451
Bony	21.95	23.70	10.45	11.50	1150.00	KW Dinar	3.3557	5.0551	4.2876
Dubai	21.95	23.70	10.45	11.50	1150.00	OM Rial	0.3000	0.4500	0.3750
UL Gas	217.00	214.00	100.00	110.00	11000.00	CY Pound	2.1813	3.2845	2.7877

Metal Prices					Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Metal	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	Currency	Month	Months	Months	Year
Gold (oz)	376.4	376.9	156.8	161.8	USD	5.25	5.38	5.44	5.50
Silver (oz)	4.48	4.48	1.88	1.94	GBP	5.25	5.38	5.44	5.50
Platinum (oz)	382.55	383.55	156.8	161.8	DEM	5.25	5.38	5.44	5.50
AL (3 Months)	1628	1632	678	708	JPY	0.37	0.36	0.41	0.45
CU (3 Months)	2205	2210	908	958	DEM	3.00	3.06	3.12	3.18
ZINC (3 Months)	1000	1001	408	428	FRF	3.31	3.37	3.43	3.48
Lead (3 Months)	708	710	288	308	CHF	3.50	3.57	3.63	3.68
Ni (3 Months)	6910	6920	2788	2938	ITL	7.15	7.20	7.25	7.30

Main Equity Indices					JOD Cross Rates				
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
New York	DOW JONES	6446.42	27.85	0.44	US Dollar	0.708	0.710	0.294	0.296
New York	S&P 500	740.40	3.71	0.51	GB Sterling	1.105	1.106	0.448	0.449
London	FT-SE 100	4018.7	64.9	1.64	DE Mark	0.4725	0.4749	0.188	0.189
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	21210.11	72.77	0.34	CH Franc	0.5592	0.561	0.221	0.222
Paris	CAC 40	2255.47	21.9	0.98	FR Franc	0.1397	0.1404	0.054	0.054
Frankfurt	DAX	2783.89	4.85	0.17	JP Yen	0.5342	0.5374	0.211	0.212

Energy					JOD Cross Rates				
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Chng	% Chng	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
Coffee (c/lb)	115.83	Spot			US Dollar	0.708	0.710	0.294	0.296
Cocoa (c/lb)	1387	Spot			GB Sterling	1.105	1.106	0.448	0.449
Sugar (c/lb)	308.5	Spot			DE Mark	0.4725	0.4749	0.188	0.189
Wheat (c/lb)	127	Spot			CH Franc	0.5592	0.561	0.221	0.222
Soya (c/lb)	21.98	Spot			FR Franc	0.1397	0.1404	0.054	0.054
Tea (c/lb)	118	Spot			JP Yen	0.5342	0.5374	0.211	0.212
Barley (c/lb)	2.24	Spot			NL Guilder	0.4213	0.4234	0.161	0.162
Rice (c/lb)	470	Spot			IT Lira	0.4764	0.4785	0.191	0.192

THE Daily Crossword by Mary E. Brindamour

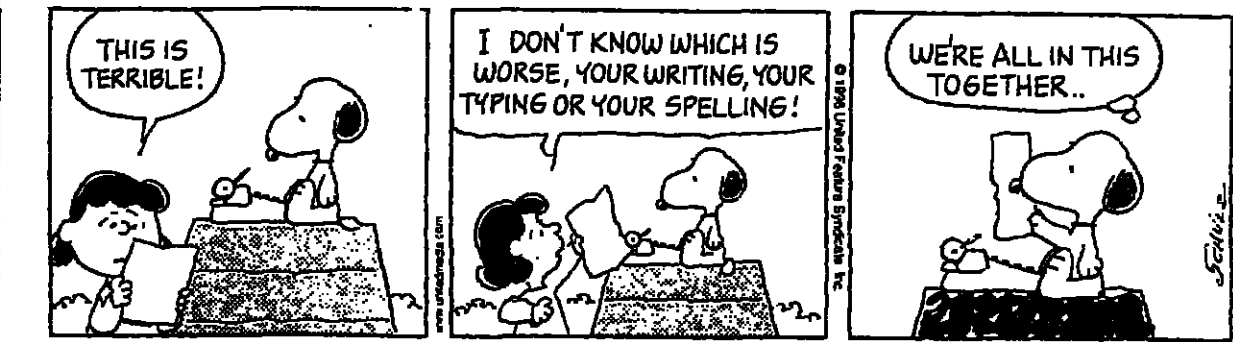
ACROSS

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- Not taped
- Chatterley
- Person non
- School abbr.
- Gaelic
- Sluggish Hank
- Rules
- Some literary works
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- Cot
- Arab peasant
- Shuts
- Bridges
- Pack up
- Alghan and Samoyed
- Priestly vestment
- Took to task
- Tchrs. org.
- Page
- Asian country
- Middle-East princes
- Making a lawn
- Thaws
- Bus. org.
- Playgrounds
- More dilapidated
- Army mule and Navy goat
- Desert refuge
- Confess
- Exchange premium
- Proficiency
- Nap
- Dispatched
- Hirelings of old
- Visionary
- Golf items

DOWN

- Hit hard
- Drunkard
- Tel
- Slits of opera
- Grasp tightly
- Rough
- Come-ons of a
- Colors
- Marbles
- Like some rugs
- Roseanne, once
- Indian
- Thrashes
- Highways
- Dwelling place
- Earth science
- Dieter's target
- Fashion magazine
- Rounded parts
- Fellows
- boom
- Bank transaction
- Movie idol
- Lip
- Weather
- Legal papers
- John Paul II
- Like actors, at times
- Blouses
- Till
- Soap plant
- Legendary birds
- River to the Rhine
- Despot
- Speaks ill of
- S-shaped curve
- Prong
- Tipplers
- Contend

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



XHOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be sure to adhere to good friends today who are loyal to you and seek their advice for your career activities. If your desires do not come to fruition, don't be disappointed, since they will develop in the days ahead.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be more objective today if you encounter difficulties in the business world which must be dealt with immediately. Perhaps you can earn an added income, through your efforts on some new project with the assistance of a bigwig.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Try not to take on any new commitments today, however be sure to carry through with any promises you have made, especially to those in authority. Later this evening you can relax with your loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Study the promises you have made today and keep them to best of your ability, so that your reputation will remain untarnished. Later this evening you can go out on the town with close friends for an enjoyable time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Strange situations arise today which will give you the opportunity to find out just where you stand in public. Later this evening you can meet with fellow associates and make the effort to complete a new project.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You may find it a little hard to get tasks done today, however persevere and you will still accomplish a good deal and gain the respect of a bigwig. Later this evening get out to recreations which your loved ones will enjoy.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into amusements today which are not too expensive and you can enjoy them more than you usually do and thereby make the days ahead more enjoyable. Later this evening you can go to recreations with close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) See what can be done today to make life more harmonious at home and thereby your loved ones will feel more at peace than they were before. If a house guest is complaining this evening, take it in stride to eliminate any difficulties.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Odd situations may arise today with regular outside allies, however keep cool and gain their respect, which will be important in the days ahead. Later this evening plan some recreational activities with your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You had better study further today before you make changes you have in mind, before you proceed. Listen to experts concerning your career activities and make the effort to follow their advice to the letter.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are not sure today just how to gain your intimate aims, so make a plan of action which will gain you much success. Think more clearly and then use more caution, so that you don't make any errors in judgment.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Listen to what your mate wants of you today and don't take the lead or you could find that there are obstacles in your path. Show more thought and kindness towards your loved ones and thereby maintain harmony there.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.



Austria's Anita Wachter (left), Italy's Sabina Panzanini (center) and Germany's Katja Seizinger join hands on the podium after competing in the World Cup giant slalom in Park City. Panzanini won, claiming her second career victory, with a time of 2:38.50. Wachter came second and Seizinger came third in the event (Reuters photo)

Italy's Panzanini beats Wachter in giant slalom

PARK CITY, Utah (R) — If odds-makers were to look into a crystal ball for a favourite for the Olympic women's giant slalom in 2002, Italy's Sabina Panzanini would be a logical candidate.

After winning a World Cup in that event Thursday, her confidence on the course that will be used in the Salt Lake City Winter Games knows no bounds.

Panzanini, 24, has raced here twice. She was runner-up in 1994 and now, on a day when 50-degree Fahrenheit (10 C) temperatures made snow conditions difficult, she claimed first place.

ioned chiefly with a strong first run, came with a total time of 2:38.50. Austrian veteran Anita Wachter was second in 2:39.12 and Katja Seizinger of Germany third in 2:39.31. Spela Pretnar of Slovenia took fourth and Martina Ertl of Germany fifth, reflecting the general good fortune of early starters in the second run.

Seizinger, the defending World Cup overall champion, used the result to maintain her lead in her title defense after two giant slalom races. Seizinger has a 160-100 lead over Panzanini.

"I would love to be here in 2002 if my form is still good," Panzanini said.

"Obviously, this is the course for me," Panzanini said of a result that placed three Italians in the top nine.

With a first and third in the first two giant slalom races, Seizinger might argue that she now is dominant in a discipline that she considers only her third best behind downhill and Super G. Instead, she says she is having too much fun to be overly concerned about anything.

"It is warm, like spring-time, and I am happy. After winning the overall last season, I have no pressure. Now I have won all the championships and all the titles. No one can ever say I did not win this or that."

While Seizinger seems almost diffident in defence of her overall title, such is not the case with Wachter, who has struggled since she won in 1993.

"I am 29 years old, but I still feel young, and I will try to win again," she said.

The Park City programme continues with a men's giant slalom. Women's slalom on Saturday and men's slalom Sunday complete the programme.

Language Coordinator

An international development organization is seeking suitably qualified candidates for the contractual position of Language Coordinator.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develops Arabic training materials, competency-based vocabulary and training regimen for adult-learners.
- Recruits local Arabic teachers (approx. 6), in collaboration with organization staff.
- In concert with organization staff, develops an intensive 12-week training programme and on-going, year-round language training regimen.
- Provides evaluations of learners and teachers, as well as the entire language training programme.

Requirements:

- Advanced degree in Arabic language education, etymology.
- Previous experience teaching Arabic to foreign, using practical, conversational methodologies.
- Previous supervisory experience a plus.
- Ability to work for extended period of time (eg. April 1 through July 31, 1997) outside Amman (i.e. Irbid, Karak).

Interested candidates should submit their curriculum vitae and cover letter no later than December 05, 1996 to:
Language Coordinator, Attn: James Madigan,
P.O. Box 354, Amman 11118



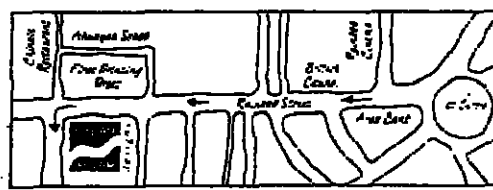
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Sat 16 at 4:30, Tues 19 at 4:00, Sun 24 Nov at 5:00 pm

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Total size 330 m2, 4 bedrooms, 1 master, large living room, large L-shaped sitting & dining lounge, fully equipped kitchen, 4 verandas, private Tel. line, surrounded by 750m2 garden with covered parking area. Location: Dahlat Al-Rashed, across from Dahlat Al-Rawda, behind Jerusalem Hotel.
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Located in Shmeisani. Fully furnished penthouse deluxe roof with open terraces overlooking Amman. Consists of 3 bedrooms (one master), 3 bathrooms, large salons, modern kitchen, with central heating, telephone, lift, satellite, parking and fireplace.
Please call: 678501 after 2:00 p.m.

Training Consultant

U.S. Peace Corps/Jordan is seeking suitably qualified candidates for the short-term contractual position of Training Consultant.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide analyses, plans, strategies and expert advice for implementing a Pre-Service Training (PST) program.
- Structure the PST in accordance with the Peace Corps Program and Training System (P.A.T.S.).
- Participates in the identification and selection of language training staff and materials.
- Provides methodologies for delivering language, cross-cultural and technical training and evaluation techniques.
- Oversees PST Director and training staff. Conducts Training of Trainers sessions.

- Prior experience in developing and conducting adult-learning training programs.
- Fluent in English.
- Able to work on an intermittent basis.
- Experience designing and implementing a Peace Corps Pre-Service Training program a plus.

Consultant will work on a compensated basis for a period not to exceed eight weeks over the period December 8, 1996 through March 15, 1997. Interested candidates should submit their curriculum vitae and cover letter no later than November 29, 1996 to:
Training Consultant, c/o Peace Corps/Jordan,
P.O. Box 354, Amman 11118

Boxer with fatal punch to fight on

MILAN (AFP) — Italian fighter Vincenzo Imparato, whose welter of blows cost Fabrizio De Chiara his life last weekend, has vowed to fight on — in memory of his dead friend.

De Chiara collapsed in the ring after being counted in their national middleweight title bout in Carrara last Saturday night. He died of head injuries in hospital early Monday morning.

Imparato said: "I'd almost decided to give up boxing. But then I spoke to Fabrizio's family, with his brother and with his mother."

"We've spoken to each other many times, and I saw them at the funeral."

"They advised me, and even pleaded, with me not to give up because I was not guilty of anything and because Fabrizio lived for boxing."

"He dreamed of becoming a champion. And now I have decided: I will continue to fight, partly for me but above all for Fabrizio."

"I want to carry forward the dream that Fabrizio had inside him but which he never realised because fate decided otherwise."

"Boxing mustn't die, boxing has a right to exist, and I will try to explain this to people. Even if things are done to make it less dangerous."

The two boxers had fought each other several times before Saturday's fatal bout and were teammates in the Italian national squad.

"We were real friends outside the ring," Imparato was quoted as saying in the Tuttosport daily. "We'd had some great times together."

IAAF delays Capobianco drugs hearing

LONDON (R) — The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) acceded to legal pressure Thursday and delayed the arbitration hearing for the drugs case of Australian sprinter Dean Capobianco.

The arbitration panel of the IAAF was due to discuss the case on Nov. 24 but bowed to the requests from the lawyers of both parties to postpone the hearing to a date which has yet to be set.

Capobianco tested positive for the steroid stanozolol, the drug used by Ben Johnson at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, at a meeting in the Dutch town of Hengelo last May.

He escaped a four-year ban when his national governing body, Athletics Australia, cleared him on the grounds that the testing procedures had been seriously flawed.

The IAAF opposed that decision but Capobianco was allowed to compete at the Atlanta Olympics after their legal advisors said the federation could be sued successfully in a civil court.

The hearing of Italian high jumper Antonella Bevilacqua, who was also permitted to take part in the Olympics after the Italian panel judged that her two positive tests for the stimulant ephedrine in May were an accident, will go ahead as planned on Nov. 25.

Olajuwon leaves hospital with good prognosis

HOUSTON (R) — Houston Rockets centre Hakeem Olajuwon left the hospital Thursday after doctors said his heartbeat had returned to normal and his prognosis was good.

But Olajuwon's doctor told Reuters the 33-year-old superstar will carry a credit-card sized heart monitor, allowing physicians to instantly observe his heartbeat from anywhere in the world.

Olajuwon, 33, was sent to Methodist Hospital, one of the nation's leading heart treatment centres, Tuesday after he had an irregular heartbeat during half-time of a game against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Physicians gave him an electric shock Wednesday to restore his normal rhythm, then put him through a battery of tests that turned up nothing that would prevent him from going back to the basketball court, Muntz said.

"Everything in his heart looks good," he said. Muntz said an irregular heartbeat can be triggered by many things, physical stress among them. In this case, it seemed to have begun when Olajuwon drank cold water during half-time, he said.

Olajuwon looked fit as he walked out of the hospital Thursday. "I feel great," he said. "You can't worry about it ... Just go

out there and play. I hope this won't happen again for a long time."

Muntz said Olajuwon would begin supervised workouts Friday, but would not play in a game for at least five days. "We want to make sure nothing trips him back into this arrhythmia," he said.

Olajuwon missed six games in 1991 when he experienced the same problem, but Muntz said his prognosis was "very good."

"This is not a dangerous arrhythmia. This is not something he's going to have a big problem with as far as collapsing or a drop in his blood pressure," he said.

Olajuwon will not take medication for the problem, but Muntz said he had been ordered to use the portable monitor "if he feels funny."

The monitor is held on the chest to get a reading of the heartbeat, then connected by phone to equipment at Methodist where physicians can see the results and determine if he has a problem.

Olajuwon, born in Nigeria but now a U.S. citizen, led the Rockets to National Basketball Association Championships in 1993-94 and 1994-95 and was a member of the U.S. Dream Team in the summer Olympics this year.

Graf beats Olympic champ Davenport in 13-11 tie-break

NEW YORK (R) — World No. 1 Steffi Graf won a thrilling 13-11 final-set tiebreaker over Olympic champion Lindsay Davenport Thursday to reach the semifinals of the \$2 million WTA Tour Chase championships.

Defending champion Graf, pressured by the booming groundstrokes of the big American, overcame deficits in each set to score a 6-4, 7-6 victory that took one hour 40 minutes on the blue carpet at Madison Square Garden.

Graf faced triple set point at 3-6 in the tie-break before pulling off her best escape, rattling off three winners in a row to extend the tension-packed decider.

A third successive groundstroke error by the weary Davenport finally put Graf over the top on her fourth match point of the climactic tiebreaker, in which Davenport squandered five set points.

"I was a little nervous at the start," said Graf, who showed no ill effects from the back ailment that forced her to quit last Sunday's final in Philadelphia.

Unseeded Croatian Iva Majoli used a pair of tiebreakers to take her place in the final four of the elite, season-ending championship by beating fourth

seed Conchita Martinez of Spain 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-4) in a tumultuous two-hour 12-minute match.

Graf improved her record to 5-1 against Davenport, but once again was hard-pressed by the big right-hander.

"She's very dangerous," said Graf. "She's a player who plays like me. She's pretty aggressive and puts me immediately on the defensive which I'm not used to."

Graf advanced to Saturday's semifinals against the winner of the match between Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Jana Novotna.

Majoli, 19, meets the winner of the quarterfinal between 16-year-old Martina Hingis of Switzerland and Japan's Kinoko Date, still one defeat away from formally entering retirement.

Annual Music Recital



The 3rd annual music recital for the students of Freddy for Music centre has been held at the Orthodox Club.

In the picture — the youngest student of Freddy for Music — 5-year-old Lina Al-Araj performs a theme by P.J. Chalkewsky.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA 1
THE QUICK & THE DEAD
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PHILADELPHIA 2
TOM CRUISE...in
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699238

PLAZA

SEAN CONNERY...in

THE ROCK
(IN DOLBY STEREO)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

INDEPENDENCE DAY
(IN DOLBY STEREO)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45
CONCORD "2"
BRAVEHEART
Shows: 3:15, 6:00, 9:00

Ammoon Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274 - 618275

Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled

Five-Star Government

Starring comedians:
Mahmoud Saimah
& Hussein Tubeishat
play starts 8:30 p.m

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155

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THE SATIRICAL COMEDY

Arab Human Rights

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Theatre is closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday
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Sports
European F
Bologna o

Italy (R) — Italy's
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prison.

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European Basketball Bologna overwhelm Estudiantes

BOLOGNA (R) — Italy's Teamsystem Bologna overwhelmed Estudiantes Madrid of Spain 100-68 in a Euroleague Basketball Group B match Thursday. The visitors looked shaky without American guard Harper Williams and Bologna dictated terms right from the start racing to a 21-8 lead after seven minutes. Bologna, who have only lost one match from eight and have the best Euroleague record this season, blasted through the Spaniards' leaky defence and showed their sharpness by netting 11 triples from 15 attempts.

Carlton Myers, top scorer of the match on 31 points, helped the home side to a 49-31 lead by halftime and a breezy second half when again Estudiantes failed to find their stride. Bologna stay comfortably clear of closest rivals Olympiakos at the top of the group.

EUROLEAGUE STANDINGS

Group A	P	W	L	PTS
Stefanel Milan (Italy)	8	6	2	14
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	8	5	3	13
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel)	8	4	4	12
Limoges (France)	8	3	5	11
Panionios (Greece)	8	3	5	11
Ulker Spor (Turkey)	8	3	5	11
Group B	P	W	L	PTS
Teamsystem Bologna (Italy)	8	7	1	15
Olympiakos (Greece)	8	5	3	13
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	8	4	4	12
Alba Berlin (Germany)	8	4	4	12
Estudiantes Madrid (Spain)	8	4	4	12
Charleroi (Belgium)	8	0	8	8
Group C	P	W	L	PTS
Villeurbanne (France)	8	6	2	14
Panathinaikos (Greece)	8	6	2	14
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	8	5	3	13
Split (Croatia)	8	4	4	12
Barcelona (Spain)	8	3	5	11
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	8	0	8	8
Group D	P	W	L	PTS
Efes Pilsen (Turkey)	8	6	2	14
Pau-Orthez (France)	8	5	3	13
Kinder Bologna (Italy)	8	4	4	12
Sevilla (Spain)	8	4	4	12
Partizan Belgrade (Yugoslavia)	8	4	4	12
Dynamo Moscow (Russia)	8	1	7	9

Packers' Ruetters retires from knee injury

GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AP) — Ken Ruetters, who helped the Green Bay Packers rise from the rubbish of the National Football League to the cusp of the super bowl, called it a career on Wednesday.

He said that he was retiring after 12 years in the NFL — all in Green Bay — because the persistent pain in his degenerative left knee "just became a bigger factor than my optimism."

Less than 48 hours after making his first start of the season, the veteran left tackle arrived at Lambeau field on Wednesday morning to tell his coaches and

teammates that he was calling it quits.

"I've been experiencing some real pain and I can't do that anymore," Ruetters said. "It's above my head in pain. I cannot do it anymore. So, it saddens me to have to do this at this time."

The news shook the Packers, who have been decimated by injuries on offense and the unexpected jolt on Tuesday that cornerback Tyrone Williams would be sent to jail next month for shooting at a car while in college.

Ruetters, 34, whose primary responsibility was to

protect MVP quarterback Brett Favre's blind side and open his favorite escape route, to the left, said he's confident the Packers (8-3) can still make it to the super bowl.

Ruetters wanted to retire in August, but coach Mike Holmgren talked him out of it and he underwent a second surgery. He missed the first seven games and again was discouraged from retiring when he was activated and had a hard time.

Ruetters aggravated his left knee against Detroit on Nov. 3, but he made his first start on Monday night against Dallas.

Kankkunen and Grist together for last time

LONDON (R) — One of world championship rallying's most successful partnerships will bid hello and goodbye this weekend when Juha Kankkunen and Nicky Grist lead Toyota's attack on the RAC Rally in Northern Britain.

Finland's Kankkunen and Welshman Grist, who have won the event three times before and also won four world titles together, will be appearing for Toyota in a top-level event for the first time since the expiry of a one-year ban imposed on the team after the Catalan Rally in 1995.

Toyota were banned for serious infringements of the technical regulations, a punishment which consisted of the team being excluded from the rally for a year of holidays and occasional guest appearances.

"Very nice, very relaxing," said Kankkunen who has been installed as favourite to win the British event, which this year is not part of the main World Championship, despite his long layoff.

For Kankkunen, it will also be a time to say farewell because his highly successful alliance with Grist comes to an end after the rally, Grist having decided to move on to a new challenge by partnering the 1995 world champion Colin McRae for Subaru next season.

This year's RAC Rally, which starts in Chester on Saturday, is viewed by most close observers as the least spectacular, in prospect, for more than 20 years because of a weak entry list.

The event lost its place as part of the world championship by rotation and will return next year when the rules and regulations will be much changed.

The Subaru, Ford and Mitsubishi teams will be among those absent which means that rallying's top names, including McRae, Spain's Carlos Sainz and the newly-crowned world champion Tommi Makinen of Finland will be missing.

In their absence, however, several other celebrated drivers have entered with strong teams including former champions Ari Vatanen of Finland (1981) in a Ford Escort Cosworth and Stig Blomqvist of Sweden (1984) as well as Germany's Armin Schwarz, in a second car for the Toyota team, and Formula One driver Martin Brundle of Britain who is driving a Ford Escort Cosworth.

Fitch becomes 1st NBA coach with 1,000 losses

DALLAS (R) — Bill Fitch passed a new milestone for losing on Thursday, while Michael Jordan moved closer to another record for winning.

Fitch became the first coach in NBA history to lose 1,000 games when the host Dallas Mavericks scored a 104-94 victory over his Los Angeles Clippers.

"A lot of losses — I didn't enjoy any one of them," said Fitch. "I guess they can say you're lucky to be around the game that long."

Chris Gatling led Dallas with 27 points and nine rebounds.

"Defensively that's as sporadic as we've been and when you come to Texas you've got to be able to play every night," said Fitch.

Referring to Gatling, Fitch, a basketball lifer known for his caustic humour, said: "I was looking at halftime in the locker room for a picture of him so I could introduce him to any of our players."

Jim Jackson added 23 points for the Mavericks, who stopped a four-game losing streak. Jason Kidd had 11 points, nine assists, six steals and only one turnover.

Dallas forward Jamal Mashburn suffered a broken right cheekbone after he was elbowed by Malik Sealy in the first quarter. He left the game and will have more tests Friday.

In Denver, Jordan scored 21 of his 31 points in the first half as the undefeated Chicago Bulls moved a step closer to NBA history with a 110-92 victory over Nuggets.

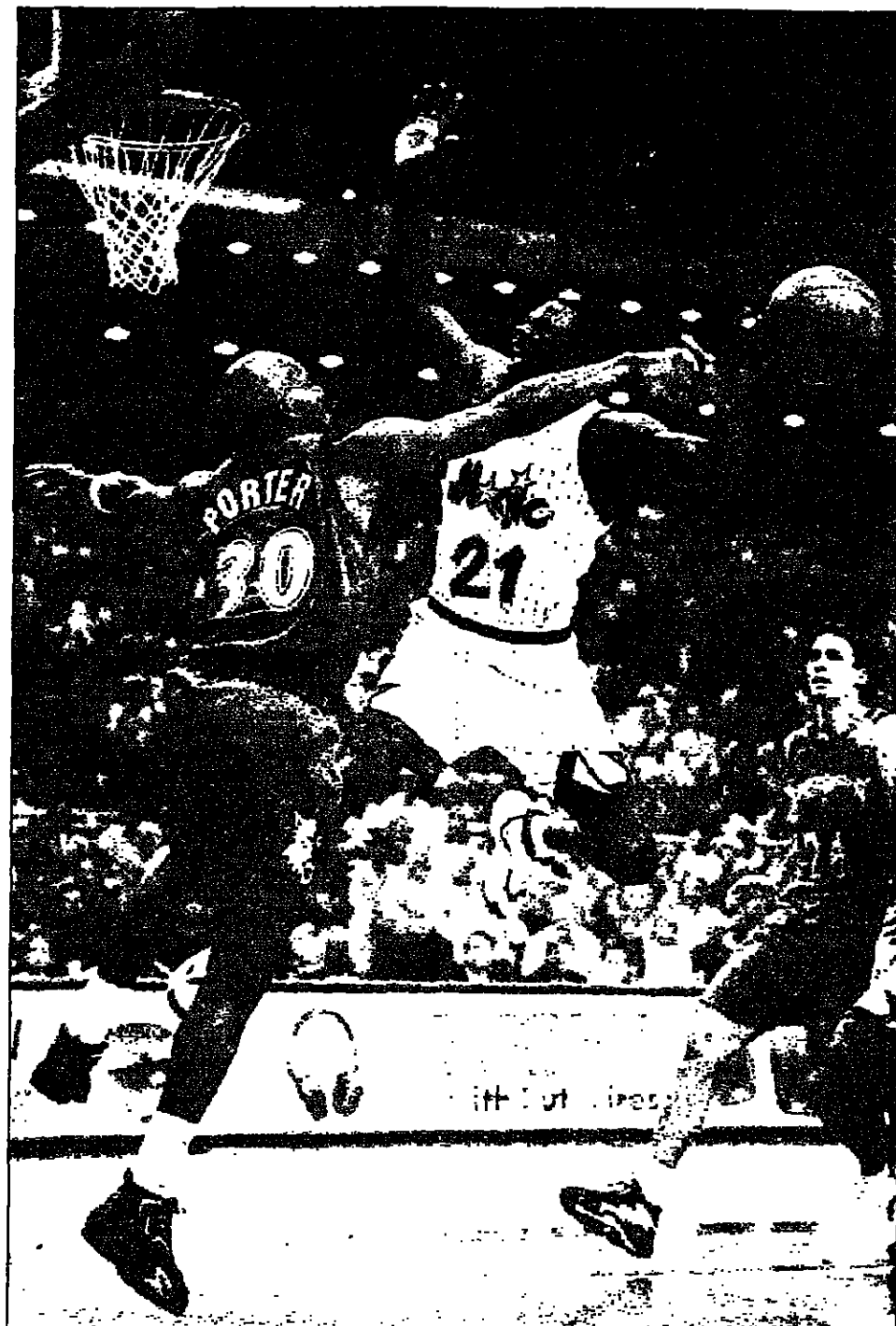
Chicago (12-0), in the midst of a seven-game road trip, is only three wins away from the best start in NBA history. The record for most wins to start the season is 15, held by the 1948-49 Washington Capitols and the 1993-94 Houston Rockets.

"I don't think we will go 82-0, we may go 81-1," said Steve Kerr. "We haven't had a tough schedule yet."

"I'll talk about Michael," said Denver coach Bernie Bickerstaff. "He's probably the greatest player ever and he stretches out and dives for loose balls. That's why he's so great. He still has the hunger to be a champion."

In Houston, former Sun Charles Barkley had 20 points to lead seven players in double figures and pulled down 16 rebounds as the Rockets overcame the absence of Hakeem Olajuwon and beat winless Phoenix 115-105.

Kevin Willis, starting in place of Olajuwon, had season highs of 19 points and



Minnesota Timberwolves guard Terry Porter (L) blocks a shot by Orlando Magic guard Gerald Wilkins during second-half NBA action. The Magic won 90-86 (Reuters photo)

12 rebounds and Mario Elie added 18 points for Houston (10-1), which won its fourth straight.

Olajuwon, who was taken to a hospital with an irregular heartbeat during half-time of Tuesday's game, is expected to miss four to six more days.

Ex-Rocket Sam Cassell scored 25 points for Phoenix, which extended the worst start in franchise history to 0-11.

At Utah, Karl Malone drilled a jumper as time expired to send the game into overtime and scored four of his 33 points during the extra session as the Jazz posted their fifth straight victory, 109-104 over the Golden State Warriors.

Jeff Hornacek scored 30 points, including four in overtime, as the Jazz scored nine of the first 10 points in the extra session.

John Stockton added 12 points and handed out 15 assists, and Malone

grabbed 13 rebounds for Utah.

At Detroit, Joe Dumars scored 23 points and Grant Hill added 17 points, nine assists and eight rebounds as the Pistons defeated the New Jersey Nets 96-88 for their sixth straight win and best start in 26 years, 10-1.

Detroit began the 1970-71 season 12-1.

Jayson Williams posted season highs with 24 points and 18 rebounds as the Nets lost for the sixth time in seven games.

In Milwaukee, Christian Laettner scored 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds and Dikembe Mutombo came within two blocks of a triple-double as the Atlanta Hawks held the Bucks to the worst offensive performance in franchise history, 73-65.

Mutombo had 17 points, 11 rebounds and eight blocked shots for the Hawks, who snapped a four-game road losing

streak.

In Orlando, Horace Grant made a reverse lay-in with 24.2 seconds remaining to cap a fourth-quarter comeback as the Magic erased a 10-point halftime deficit and defeated the Minnesota Timberwolves 90-86.

Nick Anderson scored 22 points and Grant had 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Magic (5-2).

At Indiana, Dell Curry scored 25 points, Glen Rice and Anthony Mason added 20 each and Anthony Goldwire made four free throws in the final 10 seconds as the Charlotte Hornets defeated the Pacers 90-87 for their second straight win.

In Toronto, Chris Mills scored 25 points and Bobby Phillips had 14 of his 19 in the first half as the Cleveland Cavaliers led almost from the opening tip en route to an 89-81 victory over the Raptors.

King will not return as US. Fed Cup captain

NEW YORK (R) — Billie Jean King will not be back as captain of the defending champion United States Fed Cup team next year, in-coming U.S. Tennis Association President Harry Marmion.

"Billie Jean King is not going to be the coach in 1997," Marmion said, adding that King made the decision not to return for a third year as captain on her own. "She has asked for a year off and I think after winning the Cup she deserves the right to have that time. I respect that," Marmion said of King, who turns 53 on Friday.

King led her team to a 5-0 shutout of Spain in the final in September in Atlantic City. It was the 15th Fed Cup title for the Americans, but first since 1990. "She put out a lot of time and effort on this, she is a hell of a coach and so I have to respect her right to have a year off to catch up with herself, and we will see what happens in 1998," said Marmion.

By leaving the door open for King to come back in 1998, Marmion understands he might be closing the door on getting either of his first two choices, retired superstars Martina Navratilova and Tracy Austin.

"It's an awkward situation, but Billie Jean King, for what she did deserves all the consideration we can give her," said Marmion. "She wants a year off, she's got a year off. She won the Cup."

"And I would tell whoever it is who is going to be the captain in '97 that they have got to understand that Billie Jean King may want to come back. The players want her back."

The U.S. will play its first round match in the Netherlands March 1-2 so a decision is needed soon said Marmion.

Chris Evert had already turned down the position wishing to spend more time with her three young children said Marmion.

Marmion acknowledged that a more realistic replacement possibility is Lynne Rolley, the director of coaching for the USTA women's player development programme.

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1. Copies of the tender documents can be obtained for the price of (100) one hundred JD, from the Secretary of the Tender Committee at the Royal Scientific Society, during working hours (8:00 a.m.) to (5:00 p.m.) except of Thursdays and Fridays.

2. Tenders should be submitted to the Head of the Tender Committee at R.S.S. before December 22, 1996 (12:00 a.m. local time).

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Hebron accord elusive after seven weeks of negotiations

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israelis and Palestinians ended a seventh week of negotiations Friday on extending self-rule to Hebron with no agreement in sight and a summit between the two sides looking increasingly needed to break the deadlock.

Officially, the negotiations have stalled over Israeli demands for changes in the terms for the transfer of power in the West Bank city of Hebron as outlined in the 1995 Oslo interim accords on expanding Palestinian autonomy.

But leaders from both sides made clear last week that the so-called Hebron

talks have evolved into negotiations on the future of the peace process itself between the reluctant right-wing Israeli government which came to power in June and a newly confident Palestinian leadership under Yasser Arafat.

The key stumbling block in the specific negotiations over Hebron is symbolic of the larger problems — a demand by Israel for widespread powers to re-enter the 85 per cent of the city to be ceded to full Palestinian control under the terms of the Oslo accords.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated last week that such powers are necessary to pre-

vent militant attacks on Jewish enclaves in Hebron where 420 settlers live and where thousands of Jews visit holy sites each year.

But Palestinian officials counter that broad hot pursuit rights for Israeli troops would render self-rule virtually meaningless and undermine the foundations of the Oslo peace accords signed by Israel's Labour Party.

"The Israelis want to create a precedent to change the situation in the other Palestinian autonomous areas," Mr. Arafat said in an interview with the French radio station Europe 1.

"This is not a question of security, but an attempt to change the peace accord. It

is not only Hebron," he added.

As wrangling over the issue made no reported progress officials from both sides made clear that what was really at stake were broader political concerns.

Israeli officials accused Mr. Arafat, strengthened in recent weeks by shows of support from the Palestinian public and Arab and European leaders, of stalling in hopes of further improving his bargaining position.

"The only thing that's holding it up at this point is chairman Mr. Arafat who doesn't want to agree to what his team has already agreed to," Netanyahu

adviser David Bar-Ilan said. Palestinians for their part fear that Mr. Netanyahu will present a signed Hebron deal to the international community as proof he is pursuing the peace process and then freeze further implementation of the Oslo accords as demanded by his right-wing constituents.

As a result they have demanded a detailed written guarantee from the Israeli leader that he will carry out 34 other unfulfilled Oslo commitments, once the Hebron deal is signed.

These include phased Israeli withdrawals from scores of West Bank hamlets, the creation of free passage corridors between self-

rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the release of Palestinian prisoners and the opening of an airport in the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Netanyahu has balked at committing himself to a timetable for such steps and has demanded in return written guarantees from Mr. Arafat concerning a host of alleged Palestinian violations of the Oslo accords.

As it became clear this week that lower level negotiations on the wording of these letters were going nowhere, expectations mounted that a third summit meeting between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat would be needed.

Mr. Netanyahu has repeat-

edly said he would intervene directly at the summit level if the peace talks stumbled and Mr. Arafat said on Thursday "I am ready to meet him anytime to push forward the peace process."

But officials from both sides said the time was still not right for a meeting at the top.

A summit now "will help in only one thing... the deterioration in the situation," said Arafat aide Yasser Abed Rabbo.

COLUMN 8

Dole is good sport in defeat

WASHINGTON (AFP) — From Senate majority leader to presidential candidate to ... pitcher for Air Force, Republican Bob Dole knows all about being a good sport in defeat. The 74-year-old World War II veteran appeared in a newspaper ad Thursday which shows him waving from the campaign trail. "Not doing anything?" quizzed the ad for cheap weekend fares to Paris. The spot was inspired by Mr. Dole's remarks after he lost the Nov. 5 election to President Bill Clinton: "Tomorrow will be the first day in my life I didn't have anything to do."

Madonna wants to sell apartment

NEW YORK (AFP) — Madonna may have a controversial life style, but she clearly wants her first-born, Lourdes Maria, to grow in a more wholesome environment than the big apple. The Daily News said Thursday that the 38-year-old pop megastar has put her upper West Side apartment in Manhattan up for sale for \$10 million. She told the daily she would prefer to raise her daughter in Los Angeles.

Taylor to address General Assembly

NEW YORK (AFP) — Living film legend Elizabeth Taylor will speak before the U.N. General Assembly on International AIDS Day Dec. 2. But before her U.N. speech, Ms. Taylor will be the guest of honour at a lunch given by the American Foundation for AIDS Research, which she presides. Movie directors Harvey and Bob Weinstein will also attend the event.

French say oldest profession may go on

PARIS (R) — Three-quarters of French people believe prostitution should be kept legal, according to an opinion poll. The IPSOS poll published in the Le Monde newspaper said 74 per cent of 1,000 people questioned believed a ban unnecessary, while just 20 per cent favoured a ban. The proportion favouring a ban was higher among women than men, 25 per cent to 15 per cent. The poll came ahead of the first European seminar on the prevention of prostitution, to be held in Paris this weekend. Prostitution on an individual basis has been legal in France since a 1959 law abolished brothels. To work as a pimp is a crime and public soliciting is illegal, although the law is not strictly enforced. Police estimate there are 14,000 prostitutes in France.

N. Korea gets triple value in its armed forces

TOKYO (R) — North Korea revealed what must be a record for any country's armed forces — 22 groups of triplets serving in its army, navy or air force. A report by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said North Korean leader Kim Jong-il met the triplets at a special function and honoured their service with gifts. "Comrade Kim Jong-il warmly received the triplets who are serving in the ground, naval or air forces, learned about their service and life, and noted with great satisfaction that they all grew strong enough to defend the country," said KCNA.

Iraqis blocked Scud inspectors — Ekeus

DUBAI (Agencies) — The United Nations official in charge of destroying Iraq's most lethal weapons said in comments published Friday that Baghdad had blocked efforts to inspect parts of old Scud missiles.

Rolf Ekeus said that on Nov. 15, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister "Tareq Aziz blocked our team as they were trying to transport the missile parts to our centre in Baghdad after digging them out of the ground."

"What followed was a rather unpleasant exchange," Mr. Ekeus said in a telephone interview with the Gulf Today newspaper of the United Arab Emirates. The paper did not say from where Mr. Ekeus was speaking, but he was due to arrive in Kuwait on Friday as part of a Gulf tour.

Iraq says it has destroyed all of its deadliest weapons under the terms of the U.N. ceasefire that ended the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait. But Mr. Ekeus has said Iraq still has missiles left.

Mr. Ekeus said that U.N. inspectors had left Iraq due to the incident. "But before they left, they were jostled by security men who tried to search their cargo," the English-language newspaper quoted Mr. Ekeus as saying.

U.N. inspectors want to test old Scud missiles in laboratories outside Iraq to assess claims that Baghdad has destroyed all of its Scuds.

Mr. Ekeus said he had protested the Iraqi action in a letter to Mr. Aziz, the newspaper reported. But Mr. Aziz replied that the removal of Scuds was "not the type of joint work" envisaged by the joint action programme, which was he and Mr. Ekeus agreed to at a meeting last June, the newspaper reported.

Mr. Aziz said Iraq had its own laboratory where the scientific assessment could be carried out, the paper said.

Mr. Aziz "was clearly worried," Mr.

Ekeus told the newspaper.

Mr. Ekeus is due to begin his next mission to Iraq on Dec. 8.

His deputy, Charles Duelfer, arrived in Baghdad on Friday, but said that no new inspections would be carried out during his visit.

He said he planned to meet Iraqi officials during the three-day trip for talks mainly on monitoring Iraq's compliance.

Mr. Ekeus recently said he would try a new tack with Iraqi political leaders on his mission next month in an effort to press Iraq to disclose information on unaccounted for ballistic missiles.

Iraq: U.S. forces torched oil wells

Iraq's foreign minister said meanwhile that the U.S.-led coalition — and not retreating Iraqis — set fire to more than 700 oil wells in the last days of the Gulf war.

The burning wells darkened the skies over Kuwait and caused widespread environmental damage. It took months to put them out, setting back Kuwait's plan to rebuild its oil industry.

But Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf said it was the U.S.-led forces that bombed the wells during the war, possibly to prevent the Iraqi army from using them.

"We have been stressing that allied forces have bombed oil wells in Kuwait, but our statements were ignored," Mr. Sahaf said in a statement published Friday in Iraqi newspapers. "Evidence prove now that what Iraq has said was right."

"The fact that allied forces bombed the wells is becoming more concrete day after day," he said.

Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, and occupied the emirate for seven months before a U.S.-led invasion drove its troops out.



SCUFFLES: An Israeli policeman reaches round the head of an Arab man to grab the shirt of another (bottom right) who ducks out of the grip of the police during scuffles outside the prime minister's office on Friday (Reuters photo)

Rafsanjani seeks to contain row with Germany

TEHRAN (AP) — Amid efforts to diffuse a row with Germany, Iran's president said Friday that his country was sure the Bonn government was not behind terrorism accusations made by German prosecutors.

"We still believe that the German government's policy has nothing to do with the court's action," Hashemi Rafsanjani told worshippers gathered for Friday prayers.

"We should not forget that the German government is under the pressure of the United States and Israel," he told the gathering at Tehran University.

"We have no doubt that the people of Germany wish to be sincere and cooperate with our great nation. We have enjoyed good ties throughout history," he said in remarks broadcast by state-run Tehran radio.

On Thursday, an Iranian television report said that German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had written to Mr. Rafsanjani appealing for calm and warning that relations between the two countries could suffer.

"I shall send a reply to Mr. Kohl and you will be made aware of my reply," Mr. Rafsanjani said Friday.

German prosecutors have recommended that Kazem Darabi, an alleged member of the Iranian intelligence, and another suspect be sentenced to life in prison for the September 1992 killings in Berlin of a Kurdish opposition leader and three aides.

They recommended prison sentences ranging from five years to 11 years for three other defendants tried as accomplices.

In March, German prosecutors issued an arrest warrant for Iran's intelligence chief, Ali Fallahian.

Taliban claim downing Dostum warplane with Stinger missile

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — The Taliban militia Friday shot down a jet belonging to Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum as fighting flared-up between the two forces in the north-western Afghan province of Badghis, Taliban officials said.

The militia brought down the jet with the help of a Stinger missile while it was bombing their positions in Morghab district in Badghis, a Taliban spokesman told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

No independent confirmation of the Taliban claim was immediately available. The portable Stinger surface-to-air missiles were supplied to the Afghan guerrilla groups by western countries during their 1979-89 war against the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

Afghan sources said a Hezbe-Islami faction commander, Hassan, handed at least 19 shoulder-carried Stingers to the Taliban when they overran former Afghan premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's key eastern base of Sarobi ahead of capturing Kabul in September.

The Taliban on Friday warned they had sufficient

number of Stinger missiles, the private news agency AIP said.

It quoted Taliban officials in western Herat province as saying that the pilot of the jet, Najeebullah, had been arrested.

Taliban officials said the air strikes came as Dostum forces lost some 10 kilometres of ground including Akazai village north of Morghab late Thursday to the Taliban.

Fighting in General Dostum's province of Badghis erupted in late October when the Taliban invaded the area taking the provincial capital Qala-e-Nau in October.

U.N. sources said the fighting had displaced thousands of people who have taken shelter in Herat city and adjoining areas.

AIP, quoting militia officials, said Dostum troops suffered heavy casualties as fighting intensified with the new Taliban operation in Badghis.

At least 25 Dostum fighters have died and 30 had been captured it said adding that the Taliban operation to flush out Dostum forces from the area was continuing.

Numerous explosions and the vicious rattle of machine guns shook the frontline north of Kabul Friday as Dostum troops mounted an attack and the Taliban responded with heavy rocket fire.

The two-pronged assault started early Friday and throughout the day heavy artillery fire could be heard, but it does not appear either side lost ground.

"We are not equipped for winter fighting and that's why our enemy is constantly attacking," said Zamin Mula Kahar, a Taliban commander at an observation post.

Behind him, a powerful multi-barrel rocket launcher was spitting rockets into the clear blue winter sky. The impact of the rockets sent clouds of smoke and dust billowing skyward.

Fighting has persisted for weeks on the frontline, about 20 kilometres north of the war-torn capital, while the United Nations tries to negotiate a peaceful settlement. Another round of peace talks between the Taliban and the four-party alliance arrayed against them is scheduled to begin in early December.

Bosnia still without a government

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnia's three-man presidency again failed to agree on a government for the country Friday, one month after its first meeting, officials said.

Bosnia remains rudderless despite eight sessions of its top ruling body collective presidency elected in a Sept. 14 poll. As long as Bosnia stays without a government, international bodies, such as the World Bank, cannot sign agreements with the republic.

Gathering in a Serb-held suburb of Sarajevo, Muslim Alija Izetbegovic, his Croat counterpart, Kresimir Zubak, and their Bosnian Serb counterpart, Momcilo Krajisnik, met for two hours Friday morning.

According to a statement released after the meeting,

the presidency said it held "intensive discussions" on the organisation of the council of ministers, Bosnia's new-law government. But the three men deferred any decision until their next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday.

Disagreements over the size of the council and who should represent which community in the various departments has prevented the trio from reaching a decision, officials said.

Besides discussions on the government, the three members talked about next month's major review of the Dayton peace accords in London and efforts to establish phone links throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In addition, the presidency reaffirmed an earlier decision

on the "total immunity" of those in public office. Last week, Bosnian Serb courts issued proceedings against Mr. Izetbegovic who they allege is guilty of war crimes.

The official statement said that the presidency "demanded that all legal acts... inconsistent with that decision be immediately withdrawn."

Bosnia's Muslims and Croats fought against the Bosnian Serbs for nearly four years of war. Following the Dayton peace accords which were signed in Paris in December, the country was divided into two equal halves under one weak central government.

Omar Rifai regrets Israeli comments

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian Ambassador to Israel Omar Rifai has regretted Israeli criticism for the Jewish state's agreements with the Arab parties.

Mr. Rifai said that the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement was signed between two countries and not between Jordan and an Israeli party. That was a reference to recent comments attributed to members of the ruling Likud Party criticising parts of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty.

Mr. Rifai, referring to criticism voiced by Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon of the water agreement between Jordan and Israel, said that such criticism "is baseless and unacceptable."

"Israel has not supplied Jordan with its share of water for the last year according to the agreement," said Mr. Rifai.

In the October 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, Israel agreed to honour Jordan's share of water from sources that both countries have access to. However, Israel has yet to fulfil all provisions in the section on water in the peace treaty.

Mr. Sharon, a hardliner, had asserted that Israel was facing water shortage and said that he "could not understand how it had agreed to supply (Jordan) with a vast amount of water."

U.S. plans to investigate China trade with Iran

MANILA (R) — The United States said on Friday there is "no question" China and Iran do business and it plans to probe new allegations Beijing may have broken commitments or laws designed to curb certain transactions with Iran.

But State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said there was no proof China was guilty of violations, and the charges would not derail a planned exchange of summits in Washington and Beijing.

"There is no question that there is trade between China and Iran... but we have not determined that China has violated the current commitments it has made to the United States or to other members of the international community," he told a news briefing.

Mr. Burns did not elaborate on China-Iran trade.

He noted, however, other countries, such as Russia and European allies, continued trade with Iran despite U.S. moves to curb any aid that might help Tehran acquire mass destruction weapons.

Mr. Burns was responding to a published report China recently sold Iran missile technology, advanced radar components and nearly 400 tonnes of chemicals used to produce nerve agents. The report, in the Washington Times, cited a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report.

The article precedes a weekend meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin and follows talks in

Beijing on Wednesday between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and senior Chinese leaders which put the shaky Beijing-Washington relationship on a better footing. Mr. Christopher said China agreed to adopt nationwide export controls and reaffirmed its commitment to a 1994 accord on curbing missile sales. China also pledged to seek by April 29 ratification of the chemical weapons convention banning use, production or transfer of chemical arms, Mr. Burns said.

The Washington Times said the alleged transfer of missile-guidance components to Iran may violate Beijing's 1994 commitment to an international pact on curbing such sales.

Some of the arms-technology transfers may violate a 1992 U.S. law requiring sanctions on any nation exporting destabilising conventional weapons to Iran or Iraq, the newspaper said.

There is doubt whether the law has been infringed because some of Beijing's commitments leave room for interpretation and for transfers of so-called "dual use" items that could be used for purposes other than weapons development.

Quoting what it called a top-secret Oct. 2 report, the newspaper said the China Precision Engineering Department agreed in August to sell gyroscopes and other high-tech devices to Iran that could be used to build and test missile guidance components.

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on Saturday.
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